

**EXPLORING THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN SENIOR  
LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES OF SOUTH ETHIOPIA**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, **Tafano Ouke Labiso**, declare that “**Exploring the Underrepresentation of Women in Senior Leadership Positions of the Public Universities of South Ethiopia**” is my own original work, and I have acknowledged all the sources that I have used for this study in the bibliography part.



Signature:

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my paternal grandmother, OTORIE SAKAKO HAGGALO (late) and my mother, TAMENECH TSIGIE DINO (uneducated, but visionary since her childhood), who were the very reasons and causes for my success in all my life and for the success of this study as well.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to explore the causes of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of public universities in south Ethiopia. There were few or no women in senior leadership positions in these public universities. Therefore, these universities could not enjoy the benefits of leadership qualities of women. To achieve the aforementioned purpose, the vice-presidents, deans and/or directors of public universities in south Ethiopia were involved as the target population. Four public universities: Wachamo, Wolaita Sodo, Dilla and Hawassa were involved as research sites. Four vice-presidents (one from each university), twelve deans and academic directors (three from each university) who constituted a focus group of four participants from each of the four universities, participated in the study. An exploratory multiple case study design was used in this qualitative study.

The purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the samples. Unstructured interviews were conducted with the vice-presidents of the selected universities and focus group discussions were held with college deans and directors. Participant observation was conducted on issues related to women empowerment at universities under study. The findings showed that women were greatly underrepresented in senior academic leadership positions at all the selected public universities of south Ethiopia because of various institutional, women-related, economic, socio-cultural, and political- legal factors.

The study identified some gaps in the government's oversight role of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of women empowerment policies at universities prescribed by the Federal Government including the higher education legislation. Moreover, higher education institutions (HEIs) themselves have also failed to empower women through different mechanisms. Therefore, it could be concluded that HEIs pay little attention to empowerment of women. Currently, there are some initiatives meant to empower women. However, these, seem to a reaction to pressure by the higher political authorities. It could be concluded that women are still illiterate about their rights and are not keen to be empowered. Negative societal attitudes and lack of attractive incentives for the leadership positions contribute to the underrepresentation of women in senior positions.

Furthermore, a shortage of teaching staff in academe plays a negative role in this underrepresentation.

Finally, it is recommended that the government, society, institutions, and women themselves should step up efforts to empower women, particularly their appointment to senior leadership positions. This is critical as they constitute half of the population of both the institutions and the country. Finally, the study proposes a model that could be adopted by the government, HEIs and different institutions to improve the empowerment of women, especially their appointment to senior leadership positions in HEIs.

**Keywords:** Women leadership, senior positions, higher education, women underrepresentation, leadership diversity.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAU	Association of African Universities and/or Addis Ababa University
AC	Academic Commission
ARC	Australian Research Council
AU	African Union
CBC	Conference Board of Canada
CEDU REC	College of Education Research Ethical Clearance
CEP	Continuing Education Programme
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social science Research in Africa
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
DED	Doctor of Education
DGWSMU	Department of Gender and women Studies of Makerere University
DHET	Department of Higher Education
EBC	Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
EdPM	Educational Planning and Management
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GTA	Great Toronto Area
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HERQAA	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency
HERS-SA	Higher Education Research of South Africa
HESA	Higher Education of South Africa
HSIU	HaileSELLassie I University
IQEAD	Institutional Quality Enhancement and Assurance Directorate
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education

MOSHE	Ministry of Science and Higher Education
MoWCYA	Ministry of Women, Child and Youth Affairs
MPs	Members of Parliament
PHD	Doctor of Philosophy
REC	Research Ethical Clearance
SA	South Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Association
SNNPRS	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Regional State
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UoP	University of Pretoria
US	United States
USA	United States of America
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WSU	Wolaita Sodo University



## Referencing Abbreviations

cf.	compare
e.g.	exempli gratia – example
et al.	et alia – and others
ETB	Ethiopian Birr (currency)
ibid.	as previously mentioned (in the same book/article/paragraph etc).
i.e.	id est – that is, in other words
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no page

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, gender equality and equity issues have become topical on the global agenda in many aspects such as politics, employment, and empowerment because of the inequalities observed between male and female citizens in many societies around the world. For example, there are imbalances between both employed and empowered women and men in terms of numbers in institutions such as higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ethiopia (Genet, 2014:10). In many countries, leadership positions in general and senior leadership positions in particular and HEIs specifically are dominated by men, particularly in HEIs. In other words, there is an overrepresentation of men in public institutions and the same is true of private institutions in countries such as Ethiopia (Billene, 2018:7).

Though women represent about half the population of the globe and are qualified for leadership positions, they are unemployed and unempowered in institutions such as public universities despite the fact that they have rights and natural talents and can contribute meaningfully to the development of institutions if they are empowered and employed (ibid.). Even when they are employed and empowered, women tend to occupy lower and precarious leadership positions.

As one of the signatories to both the international and regional conventions on the empowerment of women, Ethiopia has formulated different policies and frameworks on gender equity, equality, empowerment, employment and access to education since 1994 (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2013:15). This represents several other affirmative-action interventions that the Ethiopian government has embarked upon. However, these interventions have not been implemented since the leadership status of women, within the education sector, particularly senior positions at public universities of south Ethiopia, remain male-dominated (Genet, 2014:33). The same is true of the employment of women and their access to education in the country in general and in south Ethiopia in particular. The numbers of women in academia (academic staff) and top leadership positions such

as presidents, vice-presidents, deans, academic directors, and in the registrar's offices and directorates are generally small.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

It is critical that women should become active participants in key positions in society including leadership. Ethiopia has introduced different policies, legal frameworks and guidelines intended to enhance gender parity (Assefa, 2017:13; Genet, 2014:33). It is assumed that a significant number of women in senior leadership positions play an important role in promoting the status of women along with other related measures taken in Ethiopia. Women need to be present in top university leadership positions in line with the global trends and Ethiopia's vision to achieve gender parity within the public and private sectors. When women are well represented in leadership positions within the higher education sector, and are gender conscious, they have the power to shape policies and introduce change that could be useful for both women and men.

Historically, women have been underrepresented in senior leadership positions of HEIs in Ethiopia (Genet, 2014:33). A lack of a single woman president in Ethiopian public universities is a cause for concern. However, no adequate research has been conducted on the causes of this (Genet, 2014:33; MoE, 2013:15). Despite the existence of different policies intended to redress these inequalities such as the gender policy and an equal employment opportunity framework in Ethiopia, women are still underrepresented in the top leadership positions of HEIs (Anteneh, 2017:55). This prompted the researcher to investigate the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of HEIs, and to probe whether there are measures undertaken to minimise the barriers that hinder women's rise to higher positions. Women are seldom exposed to these leadership positions and are not developed adequately to function effectively in senior leadership positions of HEIs.

Although a number of international conventions and policies have been developed in different countries since the 1990s meant to bring women to the leadership of different organisations and HEIs (Klugman & Tyson, 2016:78), there is still an imbalance, as progress towards equity is very slow and there is still a mismatch between the number of

male leaders and female leaders (Airini, 2011; Griffin, 2012:425). In this regard, Nkomo and Ngambi (2009:55) observed that African potential women leaders are often missing from the leadership agenda. Jameson (2010:212) supported this idea thus, “women are still significantly ‘held back’ in global equality terms according to a range of indicators, as if they literally have one hand behind their backs while fighting a battle to achieve gender equality”. This is particularly true in East African countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya (Odhiambo, 2011:667).

Though empowering women has a number of advantages such as economic growth of a country and family welfare (World Bank, 2014:55), empirical evidence shows that the participation of women in economic activities is insignificant, which forces HEIs and the country to think about the missing and untapped talents of women. The empowerment of women at all levels of the education system in general and HEIs in particular can boost economic development of society in many ways (MoE, 2013:15). Moreover, FAWA (2015:8) asserted that women leaders can play a significant role in curbing the problems that other women may face inside and outside organisations including HEIs. First, women in leadership positions become models for thousands of girls and attract them to take part in education, make girls keen on professional careers, and listen to the problems of other women. The intimacy and attachment between and among women leaders and other women is more likely than that which exists between and among male leaders and women in institutions such as HEIs (Udo, 2011:4). This could be done more successfully if women were empowered by being promoted to top positions at HEIs.

Another significance of empowering women through promotion to higher positions in HEIs is that they often react creatively or use collaborative strategies that make them fit in the leadership of HEIs (where there are tens of thousands of both male and female students) (Shakeshaft, 2009:103). As Hirut et al. (2004:8) argued, women do not react generally aggressively to others. Instead, they use more problem-solving approaches and leadership styles which are advisable in such diverse institutions. Women are also more prone to finding out what caused the behaviour while men tend to deal with the behaviour itself. According to UNESCO (2002:35), the presence of women as staff in general and leaders in particular is likely to boost them to serve as role models and to minimise the

“hostility” of HEIs to women. Therefore, the presence of women teachers and leaders seems to be important in understanding and solving the problems women face in academic careers in HEIs. In this regard, Eagly and Carli (2007:67) noted that the ‘command and control’ approach which has largely been considered a masculine virtue are not always suitable for addressing complex situations within institutions.

According to Epstein (1988:50), many successful male education leaders employ leadership styles that dovetail with the traditional leadership styles of women such as collegiality and participatory approaches. According to Irby and Lunenberg (2009:9), there should be a combination of feminine and masculine styles of leadership in order to be eclectic and situational and none of the two sexes should be excluded from leadership. Moreover, women leaders are essential in HEIs in that they are considered transformational, and highly experienced leaders since their early childhood, they are good at conflict management, humble, efficient in resource management, and trustworthy (UNESCO, 2006:23).

The Association of African Universities (AAU, 2009) highlighted that HEIs all over the world are facing significant new challenges and some fascinating opportunities in an increasingly competitive global context (AAU, 2009:90). In line with this, the continuing underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of HEIs internationally is receiving renewed attention with the recognition that neither the institutions nor the countries in which they are located can afford to overlook their leadership abilities or to neglect their leadership potential. Furthermore, many scholars consider education, particularly formal higher education, the primary tool for the rounded economic, social and political development of many countries, particularly the developing countries that are not well endowed with natural resources and capacity even to exploit them properly (Bush, 2007:394; 2008:271; 2014:3). For an education system to achieve high performance, particularly HEIs, it is important that strong leadership of both women and men is harnessed in all the domains of society.

Leading complex HEIs where there are both male and female students, and male and female academic and administrative staff in the absence of female top leaders is incomplete without using the talents and skills of half of the population. Furthermore, the

untapped leadership potentials of women is an area of focus for the researcher and a priority area for the government. Studying the 'how' and 'why' of women underrepresentation in senior positions in HEIs; the causes contributing to this; the measures used to minimise this anomaly, and the challenges faced by authorities and institutions in their efforts to improve their participation are vital and explored in this study.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Since 1991, the Federal Government of Ethiopia initiated reforms and affirmative-action policies including the formulation of gender policy. However, the number of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs is still insignificant (MoE, 2013:15). Research on this phenomenon is still limited in Ethiopia. As Ulman (1996:511) argued, having gender-diverse points of view for those in executive leadership positions yields a wider and better approach to decision-making. By implication, women should hold senior positions in HEIs, and gender diversity should be part of the HEIs' transformation and reform efforts. However, some empirical evidence shows that the implementation of affirmative action in this regard has its own problems and as a result, a significant number of women blame these so-called affirmative measures, as unnecessary and even to be widening the discrimination gap between women and men (Hirut et al., 2004; MoE, 2013:15).

Furthermore, there are few statistics and little other information about why there are only few or no women in senior leadership positions in the public universities such as presidents and deans. It is not clear as to why women have not taken advantage of the affirmative-action policies to apply for top leadership positions in the expanded university institutions. It is also not clear as to why women who have been appointed to senior positions in HEIs in Ethiopia leave the leadership positions and the higher education system as well. This attrition might explain why other women are discouraged from aspiring to take up such positions of leadership. According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020), women constitute almost half of the Ethiopian population (49.98% out of a total population of approximately 115 million). In fact, access to education for women in general and to higher education in particular has been increasing (MoE, 2013:15). However, nationwide executive leadership positions of HEIs

remains highly male-dominated and the absence of female leaders in organisations such as these is a cause for great concern (MoE, 2013:17).

The above idea is supported by the Ethiopia's public HEIs' statistical information that indicates that "...there are no women university presidents, few or no deans, and academic directors..." (MoE, 2013:15). Furthermore, according to World Economic Forum report of 2013/2014, Ethiopia stands 130<sup>th</sup> in women's education achievement; and 118<sup>th</sup> in overall achievements out of 135 countries of the world, and women are underrepresented in senior leadership positions in HEIs (World Bank, 2014:53). However, not enough studies have been conducted to fill that gap and no fully-fledged solution has been found except the general policy formulation in Ethiopia.

What is more concerning is that no association or interest group of women in HEIs has been established to date. In this regard, the absence of women senior leaders in HEIs does not only cause alienation, frustration and marginalisation, but it also makes retention and recruitment of future aspiring women leaders more difficult (Cook & Glass, 2014:100; MoE, 2013:15). The aforementioned realities, along with the personal experiences and services of the researcher at a public university for 12 years as a lecturer and his qualification and specialization (Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership & Management) has triggered his interest to undertake this study.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.4.1 Main Research Question**

More specifically, this study seeks to answer the following main research question: "What factors contribute to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in public HEIs of south Ethiopia?"

### **1.4.2 Sub-Questions**

In order to address the main research question adequately, the following sub-questions are posed:

- What are the causes of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of HEIs in South Ethiopia?
- What measures do the institutions and government take to tackle the underrepresentation of women in leadership of HEIs in South Ethiopia?
- What challenges do HEIs, the government, women, and the society face while trying to solve the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions?
- How do women deal with their underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs?
- How can the problem of women underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs of south Ethiopia be tackled?

## **1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This section deals with the aim that this study sought to achieve, and the specific objectives formulated to answer the research questions.

### **1.5.1 Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study was to explore factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs of south Ethiopia and propose solutions based on the findings.

### **1.5.2. Objectives of the Study**

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives are formulated:

1. To explore the causes of the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs.
2. To investigate the measures undertaken to tackle the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions regionally, nationally, and institutionally.
3. To identify the challenges that HEIs authorities, women, the Federal Government, and society face in their efforts to solve the problem of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership.



4. To investigate how women see their underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs.
5. To propose some possible strategies to tackle the problems of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs in South Ethiopia.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

A survey of literature, observation and the current statistics of public HEIs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia show that there is little information about the actual position of women in senior leadership positions in higher education. There is also insufficient data on the factors affecting women aspiring to senior leadership positions. In this sense, this study sought to probe the scarcity of women in senior leadership positions in public HEIs of south Ethiopia despite the increasing number of women graduating from HEIs in Ethiopia in general. It is assumed that the study could yield adequate information for women who aspire to hold senior leadership positions in higher education. Furthermore, the findings of the study could also add to the literature on women leadership in higher education, as there is a dearth of literature on this phenomenon currently, or studies on women leadership in Ethiopia's HEIs. The dissemination of the findings through different mechanisms could contribute to the reduction of both the implicit and explicit gender-based violence (both internal and external) against women and motivate more women to take up senior leadership positions in HEIs.

Furthermore, when women hold senior leadership positions at HEIs, they become role models for other women and girls in the country. Secondly, they benefit financially from decent salaries associated with senior positions, which has the potential to increase their motivation and satisfaction levels. In addition, they may be more celebrated by society for breaking the 'glass ceiling' and resisting the 'glass cliff'. It is also assumed that the findings will provide policy makers with adequate information about the existing inequalities between men and women in senior leadership positions in HEIs and strategies on how to address them. Finally, the findings could provide policy makers and senior officials at HEIs with empirical findings that can lead to evidence-informed decision-making in their respective universities and positions.

## **1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study was to explore factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in public HEIs of South Ethiopia. Accordingly, it sought to identify the causes of their absence in senior leadership positions within the universities and to propose strategies that could tackle the problems. The study, therefore, was geographically delimited to four public universities of South Ethiopia out of seven in the region, and conceptually to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of southern Ethiopian HEIs. It also targeted those in leadership positions such as vice-presidents and deans and/or directors of colleges and schools. In this regard, four vice-presidents and twelve deans and directors (three from each university) were selected purposefully based on their experiences and knowledge of the phenomenon investigated.

## **1.8 RESEARCH PARADIGM, METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

Researchers have different perceptions and views of the world and ways of interacting with their environment. Accordingly, research is conducted in different ways. However, there should be some rules and standards that guide the researcher's beliefs and actions. Such standards can be referred to as a paradigm or philosophical assumptions (Kivunja, 2017:26; Scotland, 2012:9). This section highlights the research paradigm, research methodology and design used in this study. Moreover, data collection activities, data analysis, credibility, trustworthiness, transferability, and ethical considerations are discussed briefly.

### **1.8.1 Research Paradigm**

This qualitative, exploratory multiple case study was influenced by the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm (Kivunja, 2017:26). The rationale is that this study seeks to explore the causes of women underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs and the perceptions of vice-presidents and deans and directors of colleges and schools of public universities of south Ethiopia of this phenomenon. Therefore, an interpretivist or constructivist paradigm is employed. According to Mertens (2009:11), the assumption guiding this paradigm, is that knowledge is socially constructed by people who take part

in the research process and the researcher. Therefore, it is imperative that the researcher should attempt to understand the existing experiences from the perceptions of those who live it. The way women empowerment is improved should be done in the context of the participants' subjective and multiple perceptions. Accordingly, the vice-presidents of public universities of south Ethiopia were interviewed first. Next, focus group discussions were held with the deans and/or academic directors of colleges of four public universities, and participant observations were conducted as they enabled the generation of rich data as discussed in Chapter 4.

### **1.8.2 Method and Procedure of Data Collection**

Qualitative data collection is more than simply deciding on whether one will observe or interview people. The process should include at least five steps: identifying participants and sites, gaining access, determining types of data to collect, developing data collection forms, and administering the data collection process (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012:381).

### **1.8.3 Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique?**

#### **1.8.3.1 Population**

The target populations for this study were vice-presidents, and deans and/or academic wing directors of the seven public universities of south Ethiopia – Dilla University, Hawassa University, Wachamo University, Arbaminch University, Wolkite University, Mizan Tepi University, and Wolaita Sodo University based on their geographic proximities to each other, long experiences, and similarities in many socio-cultural, and political-legal aspects including same patriarchal system. The rationale for the selection of public universities is that the representation of women in senior leadership positions in private universities is better than that of public universities in Ethiopia.

#### **1.8.3.2 Sampling techniques and sample size**

It is obvious that data gathering is crucial in research as the data are meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework. It then becomes imperative that selecting the manner of obtaining data and from whom the data would be acquired be

done with sound judgement, especially since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data (Etikan, Musa. & Alkassim, 2015:4). On the other hand, sample represents the population (ibid.), and sampling for qualitative research is usually done through a purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2014:232; Goulding, 2002). It is typical in qualitative research to study a few individuals or a few cases. This is because the overall ability of a researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site (Creswell, 2014:232), and in some cases the researcher might study a single individual or site or in other cases, the number of participants and sites can be several. This study involved multiple cases. In this regard, purposive sampling technique was employed for selecting the samples.

Purposive sampling technique, also called judgement sampling, was the deliberate choice of the researcher due to the pertinent experiences that the participants possessed for this qualitative study. It is a non-random technique that does not need a set number of participants (Etikan, 2015:4). Thus, it was used in this study to identify and select the participants for the most appropriate use of available resources. This involved the identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that held top and senior leadership positions. In addition to knowledge and experience, the availability and willingness to participate in, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner are essential (Etikan, 2015:4; Oppong, 2013:9). The idea behind this technique is to concentrate on people with particular characteristics who are better to assist with the relevant research.

With regard to the type of purposive sampling method, homogenous purposive sampling method was employed for this study, because this method focused on participants who shared similar traits or specific characteristics (Oppong, 2013:9). This took into consideration that the participants of this study are of similar organisational culture and jobs. Hence, the idea is to focus on this precise similarity and how it relates to the topic being researched. On the other hand, the quality of a research study mostly depends on the suitability of the sampling strategy employed (Lodico et al., 2006:34). The decision, regarding which information is needed, depends on the nature of the sampling of population. Out of a total of seven public HEIs of South Ethiopia, four had served for more

than eight years as universities, while three had served for less than five years when this study started in 2013. These four HEIs were selected using a purposive sampling method, and the same purposive sampling technique was used to select vice-presidents and deans and/or directors of these four universities based on the assumption that participants who held top leadership positions of HEIs would provide the researcher with adequate and relevant information.

With regard to the selection of the colleges, Engineering, Natural and Computational Science, Education and Behavioural sciences, social sciences and humanity, health and medicine, Basic Education, and Business and Economics of the four public HEIs of South Ethiopia were selected purposively, too. These colleges were selected because at present the Federal Government of Ethiopia has given more emphasis to these disciplines hoping that they may contribute more to the growth, development and poverty reduction of the country and its entire people than other colleges and disciplines (MoE, 2013:15). On the other hand, empowering women is stipulated in the constitution of the FDRE based on various advantages of women leaders in higher education in general and in hard science areas in particular (MoE, 2013:15). Moreover, these were colleges where the number of top female leaders has been almost non-existent in the history of Ethiopian HEIs (Genet, 2014:33; MoE, 2013:16).

#### **1.8.4 Data Collection Tools**

Case study research is qualitative research in which the researcher explores a real life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection (Creswell, 2014:233; Gay et al., 2012:381). As to Creswell, it presents an in-depth understanding of the case. Furthermore, in qualitative research, the approach relies on general interviews or observations so that one cannot restrict the views of participants. The researcher does not also use someone else's instruments as in quantitative research and gather closed-ended information (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:381). In order to accomplish this, the researcher used many forms of the qualitative data tools such as unstructured interviews and focus group discussion, and participant observation.

#### 1.8.4.1 Qualitative data collection tools

Unstructured face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews, and a checklist for participant observation were prepared.

- Unstructured interviews

With regard to data collection procedures, 23 face-to-face and unstructured interview questions of a comprehensive nature were drafted for the four vice-presidents. It was also thought that these 23 questions would address all the three research categories – that they were all-inclusive and would answer all the research questions.

- Focus groups

Twenty-three focus group questions were drafted for the 12 deans (three from each university).

- Observations

A checklist with 18 questions revolving around the five research questions and three categories for participant observation was prepared.

All documentation was sent to the supervisor for scrutiny and validation before collecting the actual data. All the communication with the participants was in person. The categories of the questions were as follows:

- Category 1: Causes for women underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in the HEIs of south Ethiopia;
- Category 2: Measures undertaken to tackle women underrepresentation in HEIs of South Ethiopia; and
- Category 3: challenges that HEIs, the Federal Government, women themselves, and the large society faced while attempting to tackle the underrepresentation problems of women in senior leadership positions.

Based on the comments from the supervisor, some amendments were made. After obtaining the final approval from the supervisor on the validity of the instruments, the

researcher took a letter of permission and informed consent from the concerned authorities and participants of the four public HEIs of south Ethiopia. Consequently, the researcher sent the completed ethical clearance format and improved materials to the supervisor for ethical clearance. Upon receiving ethical clearance from the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Appendix A), the researcher went to the respective universities to hold preliminary discussions with the respondents (Appendix B). Thereafter, the dates were arranged for face-to-face and focus group interviews with the vice-presidents and deans and/or directors of colleges and schools to collect data. UNISA's research ethics and guidelines were adhered to in my interactions with the participants during data collection.

Participant observation was used, because it is a first-hand experience with a setting and allows a researcher to open to discovery and inductive, rather than guessing what the context was like, and it provided a chance to learn things that people may be unwilling to discuss in an interview (Bryant, 2004:135). These tools also provide standards for obtaining an insider's perspectives regarding the issue under study according. In this regard, I took notes on observation (Appendix G) both while observing and immediately after observing the events.

All data collection tools were prepared in English language taking into consideration that the medium of instruction was English at HEIs and all the participants were qualified and had good English language proficiency.

#### **1.8.5 Data Analysis Tools and Procedures**

The goal of data analysis in qualitative case study is to provide a thick description that accurately captures and communicates the meaning of the data gathered from the participants (Gay et al., 2012:381; Stevens & De Nisi, 2000:359). As to analysis in qualitative approach involves translating the collected qualitative data into a narrative text that addresses the central research questions (Creswell, 2014:232). Therefore, data analysis and interpretation process of this study mainly relied on the six-step process proposed by Creswell (2014:232). The collected qualitative data were followed by analysis and interpretation of the collected qualitative data from the individual face-to-

face and unstructured interviews, the focus group discussion, and the participant observation as follows:

- Firstly, the researcher transcribed the collected data through jotted down notes from the individual face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation;
- Secondly, the researcher read all the collected data were read to assess the overall meaning;
- Thirdly, the researcher coded the collected data using the categories or themes;
- Fourthly, the researcher used coding to generate themes and categories;
- Next, the researcher presented the identified themes using verbatim quotations;
- Finally, the researcher presented the discussion, which entailed analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data with reference to the literature or presentation took place.

However, this does not mean that the researcher did nothing before the qualitative data was all collected. The researcher analysed some of the data simultaneously while collecting it. In qualitative data, the researcher can both collect and analyse the data simultaneously (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:381). Accordingly, the researcher had an opportunity to analyse such a qualitative data both through process and upon the completion of data collection.

Qualitative data analysis, which involves searching for themes and categories, is subjective and uses inductive reasoning. Findings are represented in words, narratives and a personal voice (Gay et al., 2012:381; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018:464). Following the interview, though it is a big challenge to analyse a qualitative data (Gay et al., 2012:381; Patton, 2014:765), through constant reviewing, comparing, grouping, regrouping, clustering, coding, and integrating of the combined, cross case repeating ideas, the researcher gradually narrows and analyses all the recurring regularities down to six major and more sub-categories. Besides that, in order to reduce and prevent the likely bias on the part of the researcher and to increase research credibility, summaries of the data and themes are reviewed by professional(s) with expertise in the area. Finally, the data are



analysed against each other to gain overall perspectives of the respondents regarding the central phenomenon according to the above authors. Hence, in this study, this procedure was exhaustively employed by the researcher.

#### **1.8.6 Credibility, Trustworthiness, and Transferability**

In qualitative studies, reliability and validity are conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigour and quality which are said to be qualifiers that ensure the rigour of the research that is being done (Golafshani, 2003:597). Therefore, in order to establish trustworthiness and credibility for a qualitative inquiry, the researcher must conduct verification strategies. The strategies used to ensure this rigour in qualitative studies are: the researcher's responsiveness, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy, an active analytic stance, and saturation (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002:15).

For this study, therefore, the responsiveness of the researcher established trust and credibility. Moreover, I was determined to be open, sensitive, creative, insightful, and willing to relinquish ideas that were not supportive regardless of personal ideas. Apart from this, I did not hold any previous assumptions or any ulterior motives regarding the study that was likely to reduce the credibility of the result. The way to achieve trustworthiness and credibility was to eliminate bias and increase the researcher's truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon (Golafshani, 2003:597). Furthermore, adequate orientation was given to the participants to create more trust and on how to build rapport with the participants and ensure anonymity by reviewing the informed consent form and by explaining the interview process. Unstructured interviews were used to reduce the likely bias on my part as the interviewer. The words for interviews were carefully selected to increase clarity.

In order to increase the credibility, different types of participants and data collection tools and sources were employed. Furthermore, the participants were given back their transcripts to check for accuracy. This gave an opportunity for the participants to correct if there was something that had not been recorded correctly. As to Creswell (2014:232), Gay et al. (2012:381), and Guba and Lincoln (1989:82), that was very helpful to develop

trust between the researcher and the respondents, and to make the data trustworthy. In order to avoid bias and eliminate human error with qualitative data, assumptions were recorded well (Creswell, 2009:167; 2014:232).

Transferability of the findings indicates the degree to which they are pertinent to other events (ibid.). It can be enhanced by basing data analysis on solid and thick descriptive data of participant experiences (Creswell, 2009: 167). In this regard, to enhance the transferability of the findings in this study, in-depth information from participants was designed to be taken regarding their personal experiences about the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in the public universities of south Ethiopia. This was ensured through conducting unstructured face-to-face interviews, exhaustive focus group interviews, and through deep participant observations. To verify that the data collection tools were clear, the researcher consulted his supervisor and other two senior experts in the area of management and leadership. This was useful to reduce the potential bias and yield meaningful information, according to Gay et al. (2012: 381).

Confirmability is the last criterion of trustworthiness that a qualitative researcher must establish. It is the process of being neutral to the participants, excluding the thoughts of reshaping the collected data into material reflecting self-interests (Gay et al., 2012:381). During the interviews, detailed notes were taken. Data collected from each of the participants was coded. Each participant had the opportunity to review the transcriptions taken from the interview to ensure accuracy. Confirmability establishes whether the findings are grounded in the data by examining the interview notes. The system approach was used to avoid any biases that could be developed while conducting interviews and observations for the current study (Moustakas, 2005:n.p.).

### **1.8.7 Ethical Considerations**

I applied ethical considerations in conducting the study. Ethical considerations are the application of ethical practices to avoid any wrong or harm done to persons of interest in relation to the study (Creswell, 2014:232; Neuman, 2011:99). Accordingly, precaution and care were taken to protect participants from possible psychological abuse, physical harm,

litigation, stress, coercion, and deception by maintaining confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and by adhering to a strict records maintenance protocol. Research ethics were monitored on a continuous basis throughout the research process to ensure that the ethical parameters and code of ethics are upheld in every stage and phase of the research (Cooper & Schindler, 2011:275).

According to Creswell (2014:232) and Strydom et al. (2011:60), ethics are very important since they help the researchers to act in a proper and responsible way. They are set of guiding principles which offer rules and behavioural expectations about how researchers should treat research participants, sponsors, employers, other researchers and assistants. In this regard, I adhered to the following ethical principles: with regard to privacy and confidentiality, participants were not forced to participate in the study and all information was provided voluntarily. They were also not forced to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours should be revealed (Singleton & Straits, 2010:7). The participants were informed clearly that they could withdraw from participating any time if they did not feel comfortable to proceed. All the confidentiality was kept, and the appropriate respondents (both physically and mentally) were involved (Schurink, Fouche & De Vos, 2011:89).

The discussion was made smoothly with all the participants and consensus reached between the researcher and the participants. The study was free from any form of plagiarism and influence, i.e., all sources used and ideas taken from others directly or indirectly were acknowledged. Adequate and genuine data were obtained from the participants and through observation after getting the ethical clearance from UNISA's Research Ethics Clearance Certificate by the College of Education Review Committee (CEDU REC). Pseudonyms (codes) were used in reporting the findings due to the sensitivity of the information from the participants to protect their right to privacy. According to Fetterman (2009:4), pseudonyms are used as a simple way of protecting the participants' identities, and consequently from potential harm.

The participants were given sufficient information about the objective of the study, methods of data collection, recording of data collection, keeping of their records, duration of the involvement, and the likely advantage of the study. Furthermore, for the sake of

building trust, the researcher's identity and qualifications were disclosed to the participants.

The researcher undertook to share the major findings with the participants in order to increase their knowledge about the topic of the study. As to Strydom et al. (2011:11), doing this is very important. All the participants were treated equally and fairly during the research process. Furthermore, written permission from selected universities and participants was gained before they were interviewed and observed. This was based on the requirements of UNISA. This was a vital process to ensure that no harm would be done to participants who agreed to be involved in the study (ibid).

The researcher was aware of ethical issues. To do so, he applied moral and ethical standards throughout the research process. It was only after the Research Ethics Committee (REC) had granted the ethical clearance that the researcher went to the field for data collection. While in the field, the researcher observed and strictly applied procedures prescribed in the application for ethics clearance. For example, the researcher submitted a formal request letter to all the four universities to obtain permission to conduct the study.

Another mandatory issue was obtaining the consent of respondents (Appendix D). After the permission from the participants was obtained, In addition to the detailed information contained in the request letter, the researcher provided oral explanations about the purpose of the study to the purposely selected participants. It was only after that ensuring each participant had a clear understanding about the study and ethical matters that the researcher asked participants for written consent. In this regard, a written consent form was given to each participant and informed consent was obtained in written form. The signatures of all the interviewees in the study were put in a private locker. The researcher personally dealt with the participants for the face-to-face individual interviews and focus group interviews.

## **1.9 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was guided by the feminist theory. According to Creswell (2009:10), feminism draws on different theoretical and pragmatic orientations, different national contexts, and

dynamic developments. Feminist theory puts gender at the centre of the research using it as a lens to see the issues that women experience (Creswell, 2014:232; Tong, 2013:456). The theory recognises the pervasive influence of gender divisions on social life and tries to understand women's oppression and the structures in society that espouse this oppression and subordination. The feminist perspective, looking at the many similarities between the genders, concludes that women and men have equal potential for individual development. Differences in the realisation of that potential, therefore, must result from externally imposed constraints and from the influence of social institutions and values (Creswell. 2014:232). The goal of this feminist theory is to correct both the invisibility and distortions of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social positions I deal with this approach in detail in Chapter 2.

## **1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

The following are eight key concepts that need to be defined in the study: barriers, diversity in leadership, feminist perspective, glass ceiling, public university, senior leadership positions, south Ethiopia, and underrepresentation of women.

### **1.10.1 Barriers**

This refers to those internal and external factors that prevent those aspiring women from being promoted into senior leadership positions in an organisation (Weyer, 2006:441). It is also something that prevents people from moving forward from one place to other (Hornby, 1995:84; Kiamba, 2008:6).

### **1.10.2 Diversity in Leadership**

This refers to the representation of women in the senior leadership positions like the presidents, vice-presidents, deans of colleges and schools. It is about inclusive leadership of men and women (Catalyst, 2013:9: Great Toronto Area, 2012:3).

### **1.10.3 Feminist Perspective**

This term is conceived as that standpoint which maintains that women and men have equal potential to develop themselves in all spheres of life but that the realisation of

women's potential is hampered by externally imposed constraints and influence of social institutions and values (Onsongo, 2003:34; Tong, 2013:456).

#### **1.10.4 Glass Ceiling**

This refers to artificial barriers that occur in career advancement for black women as they work toward advancing into senior leadership positions (Smallen-Grob, 2003:23) also defined it as “the invisible barrier to advance women and minority men into management and decision-making positions”.

#### **1.10.5 Public University**

This refers to the public higher learning institutions, currently governed by the ministry of higher education and science (MoE, 2013:15).

#### **1.10.6 Senior Leadership Position**

This refers to the leadership positions in the public universities such as the presidents, vice presidents, deans and/or academic directors (Genet, 2014:33)

#### **1.10.7 South Ethiopia**

This refers to one of the 10 regional administrative states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (CSA, 2012:14).

#### **1.10.8 Underrepresentation of Women**

This refers to the absence of women in the senior positions of leadership in the public universities (Genet, 2014:40).

### **1.11 ASSUMPTIONS**

Kelle and Pietersen (2015:35) submitted that assumptions are those items within a study that the researcher takes for granted. For the current case study, it was assumed that the participants would be honest, competent, committed, and confident to provide the required data. On the other hand, the researcher assumed that the data provided would be free from any form of bias while translating and interpreting the data obtained through

face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews, and while observing the facts. Furthermore, it was assumed that the findings would provide a number of individuals with significant information about women leadership and their underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in higher education in south Ethiopia. The researcher was born and grew up in one of the administrative zones of South Ethiopia. Therefore, it was assumed that there would not be any difficulty that might be beyond the researcher's control as he could easily communicate with participants and university officials without any bias.

## **1.12 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

This thesis consists of six chapters structured as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the foundation of what the objectives of this study are and the background of the study. It also provides statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, a brief introduction to the research design, the limitations of the study, definitions of operational terms, assumptions, chapter outline, and summary of the chapter.

Chapter 2 reviews and lays the theoretical foundations for this study and outlines the relationship between women leadership and feminist theory. Accordingly, it explores the feminist supportive theories mainly the African and black feminism, and contributions of this theory to women advancement in educational leadership. Furthermore, it reviews the status of women empowerment in Ethiopia's HEIs with special reference to south Ethiopia.

Chapter 3 focuses on the international perspectives on women leadership and empowerment literature. It gives an overview of women and leadership, women and educational leadership, women leadership in four selected African HEIs, qualities of women and men leadership, women and leadership diversity in gender in HEIs, women supportive styles and approaches to leadership. Finally, it explores some strategies used to improve the underrepresentation of women in HEIs by different bodies at different levels.

The fourth chapter outlines the blueprint of the actual research. It discusses the research paradigm, research methodology and design, and their appropriateness, target population, sample size and sampling techniques used, and gives justification for the selection of the four public universities. The chapter also presents data collection procedures and tools, roles of the researcher in data collection, data analysis and interpretation. It also deals with qualitative issues of trustworthiness and transferability and the ethical considerations.

The fifth chapter presents the qualitative data obtained through unstructured face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations. Furthermore, it discusses the findings and supports these with relevant literature where necessary.

The sixth and final chapter summarises the major findings, draws conclusions based on the literature review and the findings. Finally, based on the insights from the literature review and research findings, a model is proposed that can empower women and fast-track their career advancement in HEIs and society in general.

### **1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented an overview of the study, stated the research problems and methodology, and gave an overview of the profile of leadership of the Ethiopian HEIs in general and women leadership in particular. The theoretical and practical gap that this study sought to cover were articulated and stated in the form of research questions. In order to answer the research questions, the aims and objectives were stated. Furthermore, the research paradigm, methodology and design were explained briefly as the detailed discussion would be in chapter four. Lastly, the organisation of the study was presented so that readers could easily see an overview of each chapter and the structure of thesis. The next chapter presents a discussion on the state of women in senior leadership in HEIs in Ethiopia.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE STATE OF WOMEN IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ETHIOPIA**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, the sources like the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (CSA, 2012:15, 2015), UN Department of Economics and Social affairs report, the annual statistical reports of the public HEIs of Ethiopia and other global sources were explored, which indicate that women in Ethiopia like many other countries across the globe, constitute almost half of the population (49.98% out of a total population of about 115 million). However, nationwide, executive leadership positions of the HEIs remained highly male-dominated and the absence of female leaders in organisations like these is a great concern to the government and the country at large (MoE, 2013:15).

It was also learnt that there were no women presidents, no women vice-presidents, deans and academic directors in Ethiopia in general and in South Ethiopian public HEIs in particular (MoE, 2013:15). Furthermore, World Bank report of 2013/2014 showed that Ethiopia stood 130<sup>th</sup> in women's education achievement; and 118<sup>th</sup> in overall achievements of women out of 135 countries, and that women were underrepresented in senior leadership positions in the HEIs (World Bank, 2014:53).

This chapter first reviews the literature related to the state of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs in Ethiopia (with particular reference to south Ethiopia's public HEIs). Both the challenges and practices of women leadership in senior positions in the public HEIs are reviewed and discussed. Secondly, the theoretical framework based on the feminist theory is discussed. The key concepts and contributions of the feminist theory to women advancement, feminist perspective supportive theories, and some branches of feminist theories are explored.

## **2.2 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is framed by the feminist theory which recognises the pervasive influence of gender divisions on social life. This theory tries to understand the marginalisation of women and the structures in society that intensify the subjugation and subordination of women in general and in top leadership and management positions of HEIs in particular (Tong, 2013:456). It is used as a lens to study the oppression of women in Ethiopia in order to explore ways of empowering them. Glesne (1989:58) postulated that this theory assumes that women experience oppression and exploitation and focuses on issues related to justice and power. The feminist perspective concludes that women and men have equal potential for individual development. The differences in the realisation of that potential, therefore, must result from externally imposed constraints and from the influence of social institutions and values according to Onsongo (2006:36) and Singh and Gojjam (2015:12).

Onsongo (2006:36) further noted that the feminist theory highlights three broad perspectives in trying to explain the absence of women from senior management or leadership positions in any organisation. The first perspective is personal factors in which their paucity in management positions is attributed to psychological attributes including personality characteristics, attitudes and behavioural skills of women themselves. Some of the personal factors that facilitate and/or constrain women to take leadership positions include self-esteem and self-confidence, lack of motivation and ambition to accept challenges to climb the ladder, women's low potential for leadership, less assertiveness, less emotional stability and lack of ability to handle crises (Onsongo, 2006:36; Singh & Gojjam, 2015:12). On the other hand, a number of researchers identified institutional and societal factors like the 'glass ceiling', gender discrimination and sexual harassment, organisational culture, work and family balance conflict, lack of education, lack of mentoring, lack of role models, inadequate knowledge or competence, lack of work support, and lack of equity in pay and training as contributors to women's underrepresentation (Zhong, 2006:13).

Since the experiences and development of women in leadership are central to this study, the feminist theory was selected as an overarching theoretical framework to better

understand the unique perspectives, experiences, and perhaps injustices women leaders face. Feminist research sees gender as a basic organising principle that shapes the conditions of women's lives (Creswell, 2014:238; Gay et al., 2012:381). Feminist theory analyses how gender relations are constituted and experienced and how we think or how we do not think about them (ibid.). According to Flax (2009:34), when studying gender relations, the impact of male domination and the situation of women is explored. Feminist theorists are involved in social advocacy and are concerned with proposing strategies that can advance women's situation in the workforce and the conditions in which they live (Gay et al., 2012:381).

Although any general definition of feminism would no doubt be controversial, it seems undeniable that much work in feminist theory is devoted to the tasks of critiquing women's subordination, analysing the intersections between sexism and other forms of subordination such as racism, heterosexism, and class oppression, and envisioning the possibilities for both individual and collective resistance to such subordination. In so far as the concept of power is central to each of these theoretical tasks, power is clearly a central concept in the feminist theory. Yet, it is often explicitly discussed in feminist work (Lorber, 2009:112).

Feminism began in the late eighteenth century as a movement to help women achieve political equality and has continued to evolve, segmenting into a variety of theories without always agreeing upon answers or viewpoints (Friedman, 2011:249). Feminists in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries supported the rights of women to own property, have access to higher education and employment, adequate wages, and housing (ibid). Although political equality was eventually achieved in the United States in 1919, when the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution granted women the right to vote, women still have a long way to go socially and economically. In response to the disenfranchisement of women based on their situations at home and work, a number of feminist theories emerged that centred on the structures within society that contributed to their oppression. The reformist theories of the mid-twentieth century, or the second wave of feminism, focused mainly on the unequal division of labour within the workplace and home with the goal of treating men and women equally (Lorber, 2009:112). The theorists within the

reformist movement began critiquing previous research that was almost exclusively focused on the male experience according to Hesse-Biber (2007:8).

In the 1800s, the European and American women's rights movements often demanded the rights for women concerning their roles as mothers (Lorber, 2009:112). As a result of their relentless struggles, the term 'feminism' became popular in the twentieth century as women challenged men's power in both the private and political worlds. Out of the turmoil of the 1960s, a movement developed that simultaneously proclaimed women's similarities to men and their differences, both those based on physical differences and gender (ibid.). Economic and political equality was sought along with equality within homes and in personal relationships. Freeman (2009:24) chronicled the stories of women around the globe who found their power diminished as capitalism and colonialism invaded their lives. Europeans blamed men in the countries they colonised for the oppression that women endured. At the same time, they imposed European-style oppression on women such as closing women's schools. However, women around the globe resisted (Tong, 2013:456).

Feminists today recognise the need to deconstruct the differences among women and not simply treat all women as a homogenous group (Friedman, 2011:248). However, there are still some disagreements among feminist perspectives today as women struggle to either celebrate their differences or claim equality. Today, they are faced with the dilemma of opting for gender-neutral equality or gender-marked equity. Feminists who argue for gender equality claim that women and men are more alike than different in their capabilities, so they should be treated the same (Tong, 2013:456). Feminists who take the perspective of gender equity focus on the physiological differences between women and men and look for ways to make them socially equivalent (Lorber, 2009:112).

For the purpose of this study, the perspectives of the most recent wave of feminist theory, which centres on the meanings associated with women in society and the gender role expectations placed on women were used. In this regard, the objective of this study was to see the unique experiences of women and examine the structures within their institutions and organisations that may have led women to feelings of inferiority or social inequality.

The feminist theory, which is a theoretical lens, chosen for this study, views gender as a social, historical and cultural construct (Butler, 1988:519; Connell, 2006:837). Feminist theorists such as Judith Butler (1988:519) have further demonstrated that gender is performative, in that being male or female is not “self-evident”, or “natural”. Rather, one’s gendered identity only appears “natural” through repeated, ongoing performance. For Butler, the performative dimension of gender reproduces and helps create the illusion of an essential gender identity.

Furthermore, a feminist theory of gender is also interested in and examines the intersectionality of social class, race, sexuality, ableism and other social justice factors which help complexity and destroy the boundaries of what Martino (2008:11) calls “essentialist mindsets”. These essentialist mindsets reduce gender to an outcome of biology, thereby reproducing patriarchal relations of power. Moreover, seeking to address structural inequalities (Young, 2005:31) that produce and reproduce everyday inequities (Smith, 1990:21), the feminist theory supports the premise that women, particularly the racialised and minority ones are situated within the gender order in ways that exclude them from the ruling apparatus of society (Connell, 2006:837). The theory is premised on the notion that society is constructed, maintained, regulated, and policed by those in dominant patriarchal positions and positions of power (Smith, 1990:21), who work to ensure that women play a secondary role. For example, despite the fact that more women have entered fields formerly dominated by men, sexist patterns of hiring and promotion remain (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006:27). In an attempt to understand this persisting phenomenon, feminists have developed the theory of “gendered job queues”, which argues that the most valued jobs are reserved for the men of the dominant racial and ethnic group. Once these positions are no longer valued or begin to provide decreased wages, dominant men exit from them and create opportunities for women or men of disadvantaged racial ethnic groups (Hilaire, 2008:39; Reskin, 1990:395).

Furthermore, the feminist histories, like the feminist theories and politics, focus on domination, marginalisation, appropriation, and the othering of any social groups (Blackmore, 2006:185). In so doing, feminism imparts numerous deconstructive possibilities of dominant storylines by challenging dominant categories and unpacking

concepts like leadership. Additionally, research drawing upon the feminist theory can be reconstructive, as it provides space for voices of the less advantaged and offers alternative representations of leadership through the narrative of marginalised leaders (ibid). This study employs feminist theory in a broader way, although always keeping in clear focus patriarchal relations of power and how they are exercised in a way that undermines the lives of women (Connell, 2006:837).

The feminist theory is connected in principle to the feminist struggle (Sprague & Zimmerman, 1993:4). To engage in research that is grounded in feminist theory, one must challenge knowledge that excludes the oppressed groups. According to these scholars, the feminist theory asks new questions that place women's lives at the centre of social inquiry, while disrupting traditional ways of knowing to create new meanings. By focusing on the lives and experiences of women, a feminist perspective serves to illuminate and bring attention to the ways in which women in educational leadership have been discriminated against according to (Sprague & Zimmerman, 1993:5). This may also challenge conventional assumptions that influence social policies. This theory further aims to uncover the politics of gendered and sexualised representation including the historical, social and political context in which they were produced (Harding, 2004:63; Hesse-Biber, 2007:19). By employing a gendered lens, it was assumed that this study would generate new knowledge.

Moreover, feminist theory is committed to challenging patriarchal, racist power and oppression and producing results that are useful and applicable to social justice (ibid). A feminist perspective provides space for the exploration of broader questions of social justice, while simultaneously addressing multiple forms of structural inequality (Hesse-Biber, 2007:7). Research informed by feminist theory fosters empowerment, liberation, and emancipation of women and other marginalised groups and is consistent with the broader aims of gender justice (Hesse-Biber, 2007:8). Feminist theory offers insights into the social constructions of gender, particularly, the relationship between gender and leadership. Broadly speaking, feminist theory focuses on the advancement of women as a group, interrogating sources of gender inequality in order to bring about the aims and goals of gender justice (Tong, 2013:456).

In light of the above discussion, the following subtopics are dealt with: Feminist supportive theories and branches (African feminism, black feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, and Fagenson's model of empowering women); and the contributions of feminist theories to women leadership in senior positions of HEIs and to the general emancipation of women particularly in Ethiopian HEIs. Each type is assumed to have one or more contributions to the emancipation and empowerment of women including those in HEIs. These are discussed below under the feminist perspective supportive theories.

### **2.2.1 Feminist Perspective Supportive Theories and Branches**

Though there are dozens of overlapping feminist perspectives and theories, African feminism, black feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, and Fagenson's model are discussed below.

#### **2.2.1.1 African feminism**

African feminism is a feminist epistemology which focuses on the experience of women of Africa and of African origin against a standard feminist paradigm (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010:291). It emphasises the contrast between women who were colonised, the individuals who are considered the colonisers, and a social development imperative that seeks to raise a worldwide awareness which sympathises with African women's histories, present substances and future desires (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009:55). African women's liberation concerns itself not just with the privileges of women from Africa but also those living in the Diaspora. It is not constrained by geographical area as the name Africa suggests in both social and scholastic situations. This means that it is not simply confined to women on the African continent.

According to Bunyi (2004:13), African feminism can be a two-edged sword. It is not a philosophy that recognises African women as a stereotypical woman, if there is such a thing. African women's liberation deliberately defines women in terms of provinciality, race, and class, as a method of clarifying the current position of women in Africa (MacKinnon, 1982:531). For instance, in South Africa, the traditions of cultural events and activities which were the prerogative of the black women preceding colonisation can be identified as a feminist activity (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009:56). Their struggle for

emancipation shows that black women had positions of initiative and impact (Bunyi, 2004:13). Numerous women pioneers existed all through Africa despite the fact that authentic confirmation for some is divided. In South Africa, for instance, Zulu royal women showed a flair for administration during King Shaka's rule in many spheres of life, including the military to some extent (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009:59).

According to Booysen and Nkomo (2010:289), patriarchy and how it is practised present numerous issues for the African women (this includes Ethiopia). Numerous scholars have used the expression "patriarchy" in African connections to define the associations of social life and institutional structures in which men have extreme control over most parts of women's lives and activities (according to the above author). A case in point is the tendency for men to have entry to and profit from women's work more than the opposite. The gendered division of work is composed in such a way that women live at a subsistence level. Accordingly, women play a focal but a socially subordinate part in African culture, and as a result they are denied access to economic and social opportunities such as education that are gendered and regarded as the preserve of men (Friedman, 2011:249).

Africanist analysts of the black experience generally agree on the fundamental elements of an Afrocentric standpoint. In spite of varying histories, black societies reflect elements of a core African value system that existed prior to and independently of racial oppression (Kinnear & Orllepp, 2016:7). Moreover, as a result of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, apartheid and other systems of racial domination, blacks share a common experience of oppression (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010:295). These similarities in material conditions have fostered shared Afrocentric values that permeate the family structure, religious institutions, culture and community life of blacks in varying part of Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and North America (ibid). This Afrocentric consciousness permeates the shared history of people of African descent through the framework of a distinctive Afrocentric epistemology.

Feminist scholars such as Rosemarie Tong (2013:450) assert that women share a history of patriarchal oppression through the political economy of the material conditions of sexuality and reproduction. These shared material conditions are thought to transcend



divisions among women created by race, social class, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity to form the basis of women's standpoint with its corresponding feminist consciousness and epistemology. Since black women have access to both the Afrocentric and feminist standpoints, an alternative epistemology used to rearticulate a black woman's standpoint reflects elements of both traditions.

The search for the distinguishing features of an alternative epistemology used by African-American women reveals that values and ideas that Africanist scholars identify as being characteristically "black" often bear remarkable resemblance to similar ideas claimed by feminist scholars as being characteristically "female" (Tong, 2013:456). This similarity suggests that the material conditions of oppression can vary dramatically and yet generate some uniformity in the epistemologies of subordinate groups. Thus, the significance of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology may lie in its enrichment of our understanding of how subordinate groups create knowledge that enables them to resist oppression (ibid.).

#### 2.2.1.2 Black feminism

It is essential to highlight some milestones achieved by the black feminist movement in America in this study, as the USA is the first country where the movement of black women started. Before the beginning of the black women feminism, there had been the early women's liberation movement, especially the branch that arose out of women's experiences during the civil rights movement (Collins, 1989:746). However, early efforts to characterise a universal female experience were largely informed by a white American middle-class perspective and were thus problematic. To counteract this, the National Black Feminist Organisation was created in 1973, which is one of the groups that were established to broaden the black liberation struggle to include women's concerns and black women's claim to the women's liberation movement (Collins, 1989:747). Concerned that feminists were particularly singular in their focus on gender as a unifying caste, black feminist theorists and activists such as Michelle Wallace, Patricia Hill Collins, Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell-Scott, and Bell Hooks embarked on the task of formulating an approach to female liberation that took into account the double jeopardy of race and gender (ibid.). Later on, black feminists like Gloria Anzaldúa and Chela Sandoval and other women of

colour, sought to broaden the scope of feminism beyond a white middle-class perspective and explore the intersections of ethnicity, race, class and gender, and have them joined together according to Rachel and Harper (2015:10).

The black feminist movement grew out of and due to the black liberation movement and the women's movement (Collins, 1989:747). With the main objective of meeting the necessities of oppressed women who felt they were racially ill-used in the women's movement and sexually abused working in their pursuit for liberation, the black feminist movement was organised in the United States to motivate the oppressed groups (Collins, 1989:747). This oppression made women to be social affairs whose vicinity and needs were ignored.

Black women's acts of resistance were prevalent approaches to sensitise the oppressed groups, particularly black women (ibid). One approach claims that subordinate groups identify with the powerful and have no valid independent interpretation of their own oppression. The second approach assumes that the oppressed are less human than their rulers and, therefore, less capable of articulating their own standpoint. Both approaches see any independent consciousness expressed by an oppressed group as being not of the group's own making and/or inferior to the perspective of the dominant group. More important, both interpretations suggest that oppressed groups lack the motivation for political activism because of their flawed consciousness of their own subordination (Collins, 1989:747).

It is argued that African-American women have been neither passive victims of nor willing accomplices to their own domination according to Collins (1989:747). As a result, emerging work in black women's studies contends that black women have a self-defined standpoint on their own oppression. As such, two interlocking components characterise this standpoint. First, black women's political and economic status provides them with distinctive set of experiences that offers a different view of material reality from that available to other groups. The unpaid and paid work that black women perform, the types of communities in which they live, and the kinds of relationships they have with others suggest that African-American women, as a group, experience a different world from those who are not black and female (Collins, 1989:747). Second, these experiences

stimulate a distinctive black feminist consciousness concerning that material reality. In brief, a subordinate group not only experiences a different reality from a group that rules, but a subordinate group may interpret that reality differently from the dominant group.

Many ordinary African-American women have grasped this connection between what one does and how one thinks. According to Hannah Nelson (an elderly black domestic worker) in Collins (1989:748), work shapes the standpoints of African-American and white women. While African-American women may occupy material positions that stimulate a unique standpoint, expressing an independent black feminist consciousness is problematic precisely because more powerful groups have a vested interest in suppressing such a thought. According to Nelson (in Collins, 1989:748), those who control the schools, media, and other cultural institutions are generally skilled in establishing their view of reality as superior to alternative interpretations. While an oppressed group's experiences may put them in a position to see things differently, their lack of control over their apparatuses of society that sustain ideological hegemony makes the articulation of their self-defined standpoint difficult (Friedman, 2011:245). Groups unequal in power are correspondingly are unequal in their access to their resources necessary to implement their perspectives outside their particular group (Collins, 1989:749).

Black feminist thought's potential significance goes far beyond demonstrating black women can produce independent, specialised knowledge. Such thought can encourage collective identity by offering black women a different view of themselves and their world from that offered by the established social order. This different view encourages African-American women to value their own subjective knowledge base by taking elements and themes of black women's culture and traditions and infusing them with new meaning. Black feminist thought rearticulates a consciousness that already exists. More important, this rearticulated consciousness gives African-American women another tool of resistance to all forms of their subordination (Collins, 1989:747).

Black feminist thought, then, specialises in formulating and rearticulating the distinctive, self-defined standpoint of African-American women. African feminism and black feminism are framed as the conceptual frameworks, because both may refer to African women or

women with African origin – black women in the United States refer to Afro-American women (Collins, 1989:747).

### 2.2.1.3. Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism theoretically claims that gender differences are not based on biology, and that women and men are not all that different as their common humanity supersedes their procreative differentiation (Epstein, 1988: 50; Lorber, 2009:9; Reskin, 1990: 395). If women and men are not different, then they should not be treated differently under the law. Women should have the same rights as men and the same educational and work opportunities (Epstein, 1988:50; Lorber, 2009:9; Reskin, 1990:395). In this regard, the goal of liberal feminism in the United States was embodied in the Equal Rights Amendment to the US constitution, which was not ratified. Politically liberal feminists formed somewhat bureaucratic organisations, which invited men members. Their activist focus has been concerned with visible sources of gender discrimination, such as gendered job markets, inequitable wage scales and getting women into positions of authority in the professions, government, and cultural institutions. Liberal feminism took important weapons of the civil rights movement – anti-discrimination legislation and affirmative action and used them to fight gender inequality especially in the job market (Epstein, 1988:50.; Lorber, 2009:9; Reskin, 1990:395).

Affirmative action calls for aggressively seeking out qualified people to redress the gender and ethnic imbalance in workplaces. Men were encouraged to train for jobs like nursing, teaching, and being secretaries and women for fields like engineering, construction and police work. With a diverse pool of qualified applicants, employers could be legally mandated to hire enough different workers to achieve a reasonable balance in their work force, and to pay them the same and to give them equal chances to advance in their careers. Here, the main contribution of liberal feminism is showing how much modern society discriminates against women. In the United States it was successful in breaking down many barriers to women's entry into formerly male-dominated jobs and professions, helped to equalise wage scales and got abortion and other reproductive rights legalised (Shackleton, 2006:575). Despite all attempts, liberalism could not overcome the prevailing

belief that women and men are intrinsically different. It was somewhat more successful in proving that women are not superior though women were different from men.

#### 2.2.1.4. Radical feminism

Radical feminism had its start in small, leaderless, women-only consciousness-raising groups, where the topics of intense discussion came out of women's daily lives – housework, serving men's emotional and sexual needs, menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause (Gilligan, 1982:4; Lorber, 2009:9; MacKinnon, 1989:8). From these discussions came a theory of gender inequality that went beyond discrimination, oppression, and a gender politics of resistance to the dominant gender order. Radical feminism's theoretical watch ward is patriarchy, or men's pervasive oppression and exploitation of women, which can be found wherever women and men are in contact with each other, in private as well as in public (Gilligan, 1982:4; MacKinnon, 1989:8; Tong, 2013:456). This feminism argues that patriarchy is very hard to eradicate because of its deep-rooted belief that women are different and inferior, and because it is deeply embedded in most men's consciousness. It can best be resisted, radical feminism argued, by forming non-hierarchical, supportive, women-only spaces where women can think and act and create free of constant sexist-put-downs, sexual harassment, and the threat of rape and violence (Gilligan, 1982:4; Lorber, 2009:9; MacKinnon, 1989:8). The heady possibilities of creating woman-oriented health care facilities, safe residences for battered women, counselling and legal services for survivors of rape, a woman's culture, and even a woman's religion and ethics forged the bonds of sisterhood and the rationale for separation from men.

Radical feminism turns male-dominated culture on its head. It takes all the characteristics that are valued in male-dominated societies – objectivity, distance, control, coolness, aggressiveness and competitiveness, and also blames them for wars, poverty, rape, battering, child abuse, and incest (Gilligan, 1982:4; MacKinnon, 1989:8; Lorber, 2009:112). It praises what women do feed and nurture, cooperate and reciprocate, and attend to bodies, minds and psyches. The important values that radical feminism promotes are intimacy, persuasion, warmth, caring, and sharing the characteristics that women develop in their hands-on, everyday experiences with their own and their

children's bodies and with the work of daily living. Men could develop these characteristics, too, if they "mothered," but since few do, they are much more prevalent in women (Gilligan, 1982:4; MacKinnon, 1989:8; Tong, 2013:456).

Moreover, radical feminism claims that most men have the potential to use physical violence against women, including rape and murder. They point to the commonness of date rape and wife beating, of murders of ex-wives and former girlfriends. The commercial side of this systemic misogyny, or women-hating, is the way women are depicted as sex objects in the mass media and as pieces of meat in pornography, and the global exploitation of girls and young women in prostitution (Gilligan, 1982; Lorber, 2009:112; MacKinnon, 1989:8). Even more insidious they argue, sexual exploitation is the common downside of romantic heterosexual love, which itself is oppressive to women. The threat of violence and rape, radical feminism theorises, is the way patriarchy controls all women according to the above authors.

The radical feminist political remedies – women-only consciousness-raising groups and alternative organisations were vital in allowing women the "breathing space" to formulate important theories of gender inequality, to develop women's study programmes in colleges and universities, to form communities and to produce knowledge, culture, religion, ethics, and health care from a woman's point of view (Gilligan, 1982:4; MacKinnon, 1989:8.).

#### 2.2.1.5. Fagenson's model

Fagenson's dominant theoretical framework in the field of women in management is also supportive of feminist theory (Fagenson, 1990:204). This framework is helpful to examine why women are not rising faster and in large numbers in the corporate world. These frameworks are: the gender-centred, the organisation-centred, and the gender-organisation-system perspective (Fagenson, 1990:204; Fisher, 1999:n.p.). The gender-centred perspective puts forth that men and women are basically different and that women's failure to progress is due to intrinsic factors like their attitudes, behaviours, traits and so on, and not the organisational or societal context.

The organisation-structure perspective emphasises that organisation structures shape and define the behaviour of women in the workplace. The reasons why women have not risen to the top leadership ranks in the same way as men are due to their position in the organisational structure, the amount of power they exert in their jobs and the number of women in these positions. Women's possession of feminine traits and related behaviours like risk aversion, are due to their disadvantaged positions in organisational structures, and not their gender (Fagenson, 1990:204; Fisher, 1999:n.p.).

The gender-organisation-system perspective takes into account the gender-centred perspectives, the organisational context perspective and brings in a third factor the social system. It suggests that in trying to understand why women are having limited success in the corporate world, one should try to identify the characteristics of the organisational context, the social system and that of the individuals (their gender), which could possibly be affecting men and women's attitudes, cognitions and behaviours.

This theory, accordingly, helps to critically examine the root causes that hindered women not to climb up the ladder of senior leadership positions in HEIs. There are several age-old beliefs based on the assumptions regarding implicit theories, gender stereotyping and role expectations that have led to gender discrimination against women in the different workplaces (Fagenson, 1990:204; Fisher, 1999:n.p.).

## **2.2.2 Contributions of Feminist Theories to Women Advancement in Leadership**

According to several scholars (Collins, 1989:750; Lorber, 2009:112; Tong, 2013:456), each branch of feminism and feminist perspective has made important contributions to improve women's status though each had its limitations. The feminist ideas of the past 35 years changed as the limitations of one set of ideas were critiqued and addressed by what was felt to be a better set of ideas about why women and men were so unequal. Although there has not been a clear progression by any means, because many of the debates went on at the same time, however, they are still going on (Griffin, 2012:9). All the feminist perspectives have insight into the problems of gender inequality, and all have come up with good strategies for remedying these problems. There is a tendency to incorporate the ideas from several perspectives, and many feminists have shifted their

perspectives over the years. The main point feminists have stressed about gender inequality is that it is not an individual matter but is deeply ingrained in the structure of societies (Collins, 1989:750; Lorber, 2009:112; Tong, 2013:456).

## **2.3 THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN ETHIOPIA: CHALLENGES AND PRACTICES**

Ethiopia is the East African country with the second largest population in Africa next to Nigeria, where women constitute 49.8% of the total population (CSA, 2012:35; MoE, 2013:15). However, this large percentage of women population is denied the right to equal participation with men in national affairs in the country – a great human resource which could be brought to bear on the task of driving national development is lost. Ensuring equal access to higher education management and/or leadership is fundamental to promoting the status of women for both the good of the individuals and the country. In Ethiopia, female participants, in both senior positions of higher education management and/or leadership and in teaching profession are strikingly low (Billene, 2018:9; MoE, 2013:19). In fact, currently, women in Ethiopia, have made some progress in achieving parity in teaching profession at different levels of the education sector, but are grossly underrepresented in higher education management because of a number of reasons. Below are the discussions made about the status of women in the HEIs senior leadership and/or management positions through the lens of women's perceptions of themselves, socio-cultural, institutional, political-legal and economic factors.

### **2.3.1 Women's Personal Reasons for Their Underrepresentation in HEIs Leadership and/or Management**

In the Ethiopian HEI context, men outnumber women at a ratio of about twenty to one (20:1) at senior management level (Anteneh, 2017:55; Billene, 2018:9). According to these sources, three perspectives explain the continuing dearth of women in senior management positions in HEIs. The first perspective is person-centred in which the paucity of women is attributed to the psycho-social attributes, including personality characteristics, attitudes, and behavioural skills of women themselves. The personal factors include family commitment, lack of motivation and self-confidence. Other factors



include limited aspirations of women in the field of management; lack of motivation and ambition to accept challenges to climb the ladder; being less assertive and lacking ability to handle a crisis (Billene, 2018:9; Fagenson, 1990:204).

Furthermore, women in Ethiopia lack the required postgraduate training and skills to compete with their counterparts for promotion and positions of leadership. Time to study, conduct research, and write is also limited for women. This is aggravated by the “Queen Bee Syndrome”, which denotes that women who already hold leadership position do not support other fellow women to come to the leadership positions in Ethiopia (Genet, 2014:33; Meaza, 2009:10). In some instances, it has been established and observed that even male peers are more affirmative and supportive to women candidates than female peers are to other women when women apply for higher positions within their colleges (Billene, 2018:9). Accordingly, even those few women who have already assumed leadership and/or management positions (both at higher and lower positions of leadership at different sectors) are reluctant to bring up and promote other women to senior and top leadership positions of leadership including HEIs.

This belittling of female subordinates allow “Queen Bees” the opportunities to show more masculine qualities which they see as more culturally valuable and professional. By showing this supposedly important masculine qualities, “Queen Bees” seek to further legitimise their rights to be in important professional positions as well as attaining job security by showing commitment to their professional roles. Preventing the advancement of women below her is one way for a “Queen Bee” to reduce the number of competitors for resources and positions like promotion opportunities formally reserved or informally designated for allocation to women at and above her level, thereby easing her own progress up her career ladder. For instance, Zhao and Foo (2016:47) strengthened this idea by saying, “people with the ‘queen bee syndrome’ are always there at the workplace and it concerns women (Queens).The woman shows the alpha male characteristics such as dominant, ambitious, result-oriented, and somewhat insecure about people threatening her progress”. In this regard, though healthy competition at a workplace is a good sign, indulging in pulling someone down to achieve what one wants is unethical (Zhao & Foo, 2016:47). In Ethiopia, few women scholars who assumed some leadership

positions are found not to be willing to encourage other women to leadership positions of different levels and sectors (Hirut et al., 2004:8).

In the past, researchers usually explained the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions by the traditional argument that men are the perpetrators of gender discrimination and women are their victims (Genet, 2014:40; Groot, 2010:45). However, it is argued that women themselves play a crucial role in maintaining their positions at a relatively low level within organisations, as they tend to see each other as rivals (Mavin, 2008:19). This is also evident in Ethiopia according to some emergent researchers (Anteneh, 2017:55; Genet, 2014:33). According to these authors, successful women cause the stereotyping of other women, and in that way, diminish their chances to become successful.

Another scenario is the “Cinderella complex”, which means that all the ugly sisters fight amongst themselves to try to undermine their potentially successful sisters (Billene, 2018:9; Groot, 2010:45). Accordingly, the “Cinderella complex” as well as the “queen bee” effect show that women can harm each other in order to become the best and to be the only ones at the top of the organisation (Genet, 2014:33; Groot, 2010:45). According to the aforementioned authors this phenomenon is widespread in Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia and other African nations, it is learnt that it is not only the external factor that affects the participation of women in senior leadership positions, but also women-related personal factors (Odhiambo, 2011:667). In this regard, self-image, self-efficacy, career commitment and job satisfaction, and legal illiteracy are some of the problems of women themselves (Billene, 2018:9; MoE, 2013:17). There also seems to be an implicit assumption on the part of women themselves that problems of equity for women have been entirely solved and there are no issues left to address. This is a global truth according to Coleman (2009:179) and Genet (2014:33).

Although time is changing, there is still a greater preponderance of men at senior levels within organisations, compared to their representation in the population. This is true in Ethiopian public universities according to the Federal MoE (2013:15). One possible attribute to this is that women themselves find the environment of senior corporate life

unattractive and opt out of participation. A more common explanation for this is that women are perceived to be deficient in some ways that are important for promotion (Office of Women's Affairs Ethiopia, 2014:17).

Women choose from a narrow range of occupations (that are low in status) and in poorly paid jobs. Even when they are given equal opportunities to learn and get the necessary professional qualifications, they tend not to reach the higher levels of the professions probably because of the effect of sex-role stereotypic attitudes of the society which might have deterred them from seeking high-ranked positions. This is often practised and in line with the situation in Ethiopia, according to Genet (2014:33).

Another problem in Ethiopia as in other African countries regarding women empowerment, is related to the career orientation and preferences for certain professions. Every individual is responsible for making choices that would enable him/her to actualise their career potential (Hirut et al., 2004:10). However, women's career choices are affected by some additional factors such as the prejudice of the institutions against women, job prospects, family background, and career aspirations. In this regard, from early childhood and throughout their lives, many women are exposed to pervasive messages that their lives should revolve around taking care of other people and that their career plans are somehow superimposed on this primary obligation (Cook & Glass, 2014:91; Hirut et al., 2004:10). Furthermore, Chiloane-Tsoka (2010:76) added to the above debate stating that, "socio-cultural perceptions and societal values play an important role in women's attitudes towards certain occupations and can discourage women from pursuing leadership opportunities." This shows that women are socialised into this negative attitude of the wider society. Women are also seen as more interpersonally sensitive, warm and expressive than men and men are viewed as more competent, independent, objective and logical than women. These kinds of societal constructions that inform the notions of women as being less competent may lead to low self-image and less confidence (self-efficacy) in their own abilities (ibid.). These gender stereotypes are prevalent in Ethiopian society as well (Billene, 2018:9; Meaza, 2009:10).

In Ethiopia and many other African countries, women's access to power has been observed to be limited because of their low level of education (particularly leadership and

management education and their qualifications) (Bush, 2010:40; CODESRIA, 2012:20; World Bank, 2012:67). In other words, the pool of potential women leaders is small. Disparity is noticed in the pattern of students' enrolment in various universities (Odhiambo, 2011:667; Onsongo, 2006:36). The ratio of men to women on enrolment confirms the notion that a lukewarm attitude towards women' education exists (ibid.). The percentage of women in the academic sector is still low. Women are still marginalised, subjugated and discriminated against in the area of decision-making, the economy, politics, employment and so on (Billene, 2018:9). Education at all levels in Ethiopia is a gendered terrain and gender disparities are even more pronounced in HEIs.

Although empirical evidence in terms of the participation of women in Ethiopian higher education shows that it is increasing as a significant number of women complete undergraduate and graduate degrees, patriarchal knowledge still dominates everyday practices that are widespread in the discourse on higher education. For example, fewer women compared to men proceed to establish careers and to occupy senior positions at Ethiopian HEIs (CODESRIA, 2012:20; MoE, 2013:15).

Women also lack commitment and they do not empower themselves. In this regard, Coombs (2004:45) defined commitment as, "competence or as doing the job well" and not as continuity of a career. As women move to each level of empowerment towards control, they have confidence and decision-making power over their lives. When we talk about equality of women, we have to see if women are empowered and have full control of their lives. As they develop their confidence and know their capacity to perform duties like that of their counterparts, there is no reason to attempt to increase their interest in the work (Coombs, 2004:45; Genet, 2014:33).

In Ethiopia, the majority of women still lack knowledge about both their rights and responsibilities, which shows the level of their legal illiteracy. Key to this view is that when women know the law in terms of their rights and obligations, they would be more functional citizens. However, in most societies the law and its application are skewed against women as mentioned by Schuler and Shakuntala (1992:299). It is argued that both men and women can be successful leaders if they possess the required ability of inspiring others, problem-solving skills, emotional maturity, understanding human behaviour,

verbal assertiveness, willingness to take risks, dedication to organisational goals, and skills like human relations skill, will, power, flexibility, sociability, intelligence, self-confidence, judgement, appearance, energy, drive, enthusiasm, and appearance (Chandan, 2009:21). However, due to different legal and policy-related barriers, women lack some or many of these attributes (Billene, 2018:9).

### **2.3.2 Socio-Cultural Barriers for the Underrepresentation of Women in HEIs Leadership and/or Management**

Some research reports on women in higher education management in Ethiopia (though are insignificant in number) indicate that the involvement of women in senior leadership positions is affected by the pyramidal structure and glass ceiling (Cook & Glass, 2014:91; CSA, 2012:15; Ogbogu, 2011:15). This perspective explores societal constraints which link gender-centred and organisational perspectives together. This perspective is concerned with the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations to women and men. These gender-based roles are carried into the workplace. HEIs, therefore, reproduce gender differences through their internal structures and everyday practices, because of the organisational cultural perceptions which determine the attitudes and behaviours of individual men and women and form barriers to the equal participation of women in senior management (Anteneh, 2017:55; MoE, 2013:15). This fact is also aligned with Fagenson's critical analysis of institutional barriers for women advancement (Burnham, 2008:13). Accordingly, in Ethiopia, women's participation in top decision-making positions is still minimal because of the negative attitude of the institutional community.

Women in executive positions like university presidents, deans and boards of administrative councils in Ethiopia represent only 1.1% compared to 98.9% of men in the same positions and structures (Anteneh, 2017:55; Billene, 2018:9). Some research and empirical evidence shows that women currently occupy mainly junior and precarious positions in university management in Ethiopia (Anteneh, 2017:55; CSA, 2012:15; MoE, 2013:15). This is mainly because of the negative social and cultural perceptions the society has towards women. Women also face the challenge of balancing multiple roles of parenting, work, studying, and research (Genet, 2014:33; Meaza, 2009:10). Due to

their socialisation and other factors, women lack confidence and/ or have low self-esteem that undermines their pursuit of leadership positions. In this regard, Kagoda (2012:20) argued, “women’s lives are complex in the sense that they are often juggling multiple roles which include trying to be good mothers and competing with men who are more likely to be free from parenting roles”. Lack of daycare facilities at universities and other lower-level schools also hinders women’s ability to balance their personal and public roles (Genet, 2014:33; Kagoda, 2012:20). These indicate that the Ethiopian situation is similar to many African countries.

In Ethiopia, society expects men to be natural leaders and challenging this stereotype is an uphill task for women. There are few role models and mentors for women leaders. With this kind of domestic life, women fear additional responsibility such as leadership that would likely increase pressure on them (Billene, 2018:9; Kagoda, 2012:20). There is also lack of knowledge about gender and its effect on career development among stakeholders in education according to the above authors. That is why the implementation of affirmative action is at a low level in Ethiopia (MoE, 2013:10). This indicates that the process toward equitable changes should be improved by reducing current barriers to educational leadership positions.

As in every society, Ethiopia has its own stereotypic behaviour patterns which the men and women are expected to follow (Hirut et al., 2004:15). They begin to influence the behavioural and personality developments of individuals from the early years of life. For example, Individuals start developing personality traits of trust or mistrust in the first two years after birth. Hirut et al. asserted that children view the world as safe, reliable, nurturing, and predictable if their parents encourage them to develop a sense of trust by meeting their needs and providing them comfort; or they view it as full of threat, insecurity, uncertainty, and unreliable if their parents fail to meet their needs and are negligent to them. So, the phenomenon of the early years tends to leave an indelible scar on later developmental patterns (ibid).

Within the next few years, children develop a sense of autonomy and independence if proper treatment and opportunities are offered to them by parents. The role of parents is the kernel of the children’s personality, behaviour as well as cognitive developmental

patterns (Bourdeau, Sennot & Wilson, 2009:119). For instance, in Ethiopia, it is not unusual to hear parents using phrases like “my hero”, “my lion”, etc. for their boys to encourage them from their early childhood whenever they do something. In contrast, girls are not encouraged even to talk in front of boys and elders both at home and in public, and they are made to develop an inferiority complex from childhood. This is also practised in Ethiopia, according to Genet (2014:33).

Billene (2018:9) also strengthened the above idea by stating that “Women choose the female-dominated careers like teaching, exercise their choice based on early developmental experiences, and they are also highly influenced by their mothers or female adults in their families who are in the same field that they choose”. In this way, the issue of gender stereotyping starts to influence career aspirations at an early stage of human development. During the early stages of development, young children view all occupations positively; however, as they grow, they start developing their own preferences that are based on the compatibility of those occupations with their developing self-concept (Billene, 2018:8). Similarly, Derlega and Janda (1986:12) claimed that in the first few years of life, individuals begin to label themselves as men or women. When children reach the pre-school year (roughly at the age of 3½ years), they evince strong preferences to gender-stereotyped activities. As a consequence, male and female children start to assume different responsibilities and play varied roles at early in life. This is entirely applicable in Ethiopia (Bruktawit & Mengistu, 2015:140; Endale, 2014:97).

In Ethiopia, the ways male and female children are treated and brought up in the family constellation, and the labels they receive from the society, only because they are men and women colour their conceptions and perceptions of themselves. According to Hirut et al. (2004:8), men tend to overestimate their abilities while women tend to underestimate their abilities, although both may be equal in their abilities. Furthermore, Genet (2014:35) postulated that women in Ethiopia, have not entirely freed themselves from the effects of societal gender role stereotypes. She indicated that female and male children are still treated differently in the socialisation processes as well as in ways of interaction in their families. Accordingly, girls are trained into dependency, while boys are trained out of it.

Gender inequality in HEIs in Ethiopia is also attributed to the broader societal structural inequalities. According to Genet (2014:33) and MoE (2013:15), women are marginalised in decision-making and leadership because of negative societal attitudes. Furthermore, Helgesen and Williams (1990:321) pointed out that women have been socialised in to believing that they do not deserve senior positions of leadership. According to Morley (2014:17), there are psychological barriers to emerge from the socialisation of women as secondary citizens. This affects their agency or ability to act powerfully and independently against oppressive structures. As different researchers show, because of socialisation and sex-role stereotyping, women do not immediately connect themselves with any kind of leadership (Shakeshaft, 2009:103).

Morley (2014:17) has used the metaphor of a “public” versus “private” sphere wherein the private sphere represents the domestic life, home and family, which are considered the traditional domain of women, whereas the public sphere (work and politics) is accepted as the domain of men. This private-public dichotomy is deeply ingrained in the law too. The number of women who get into masculine-oriented occupations, especially at the managerial level is insignificant. This is also the case in Ethiopia where senior management positions are male-dominated (Billene, 2018:9; Emabet, 2010:30).

Lack of role model parents at home in Ethiopia is another contributory factor to lack of many women leaders in senior leadership positions (Genet, 2014:33). In this regard, Barbara and Morley (n.d.:6) observed, “When women talk about their female role models in their lives, they often proudly mention their mothers, how much these women had to handle. Such mothers were strong figures who inspired their daughters to later assume the leadership positions.” Women’s place or social perspective model also emphasises that cultural and social norms encourage discriminatory practices (Schmuck, 1995:199; Tallerico & Blount, 2004:633). The norms, folkways, and mores of the society coincide with different socialisation patterns that channel women and men into different areas of work and differential pay and status (Genet, 2014:33; Grole & Montgomery, 2000:6).

Most researchers of Ethiopia and abroad affirmed that people normally get support from their relatives or peers (Anteneh, 2017:55; Shakeshaft, 1989:65). In this regard, women may feel lonely if no one supports them. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011:13) explained that



women are believed to be unfit for administrative jobs due to their supposed inability to discipline, command respect, and to possess rational and logical approaches to leadership. This is supported by Lumby (2009:10), who argued that in educational leadership, being female may be seen by colleagues, students, children, and parents as a stigma, an attribute that is deeply discrediting. According to Grogan (2010:54), there are always factions in organisations wherein some support women while others oppose them.

### **2.3.3 Political-Legal Barriers for the Underrepresentation of Women in HEIs Leadership and/or Management**

Until two decades ago, women in Ethiopia were not treated as equal to men in many ways. They were not allowed to own property, they did not have a share in the property of their parents, they had no voting rights, and they had no freedom to choose their work or job and so on (Genet, 2014:33; OECD, 2010:76). Though they have now come out of those dark days of oppression, however, according to the World Bank report of 2013/2014, there is still a need for the empowerment of women or a strong movement to fight for the rights of women and to ensure that they receive all the rights which men have (World Bank, 2014:53).

According to Schuler and Shakuntala (1992:21), in most societies laws and the applications are skewed against women. Women's subordination, based on unequal gender relations, is manifest in the laws of several key areas, particularly labour law, penal law, and civil law, which govern legal capacity, rights and obligations in marriage, guardianship, inheritance, income, land rights and participation in public affairs. In some instances, women's inferior status results from formal legislation, but it can also result from prejudicial social practices not challenged by the law (Hirut et al., 2004:10; Meaza, 2009:10). This is practised in Ethiopia according to the above authors.

Another major problem with the law is that the vast majority of women are "outside the system" especially rural and urban poor women. Most women do not think of themselves as having rights. They are outside the system because they do not know what the law offers them, and this is partly because the system does not offer them very much with

regard to legal literacy awareness (Billene, 2018:9; Genet, 2014:33). On the other hand, the law-enforcing agencies like the police and the courts lack adequate knowledge about women rights and are ineffective in enforcing the laws regarding women.

According to Hirut et al. (2004:10), the gender issues have not been well integrated and addressed in strategies, rules and regulations, programmes, plans and activities to the expected level. Gender mainstreaming is still weak owing to capacity gaps of staff involved in planning, monitoring and evaluation (ibid). This is partly reflected in weak gender mainstreaming practices, inadequate expertise on gender, and lack of adequate, functional and efficient gender office structures. Although affirmative action is implemented for entry to higher education, it is not backed by systematic and flexible retention mechanisms to ensure comparable numbers of male and female graduates. Furthermore, there is a mismatch between the gender policy and implementation on the ground according to Hirut et al. (2004:10).

#### **2.3.4 Institutional Barriers for the Underrepresentation of Women in HEIs Leadership and/or Management**

Institutional factors also become barriers to the participation of individuals in leadership and/or management, namely, the structure-centred paradigm, which advances the view that it is the disadvantageous position of women in the organisational structure – few numbers, little power, limited access to resources) which shapes and defines their behaviour (Fagenson, 1990:204; MoE, 2013:15). The problem is vested in the structure and the remedy is a fundamental change to eliminate inappropriate discrimination in institutional policies and practices. Among other structural factors are discriminatory appointment and promotion practices; male resistance to women in management positions; the absence of policies and legislations to ensure participation of women; and limited opportunities for leadership training and for demonstrating competence as a result of the power structure in the workplace (Anteneh, 2017:55; Fagenson, 1990:204; MoE, 2013:15).

In Ethiopia, women aspiring to leadership positions in HEIs also face dozens of challenges in such institutions (Anteneh, 2017:55; Meaza, 2009:10). Institutional/or

structural barriers create an uneven playing field for women and hinder their progress. Such problems include policies, practices, processes, and procedures. These include the patriarchal organisational culture, unclear allocation of the staff development fund, and limited research, and publishing opportunities. Furthermore, very few women actually apply for research funds, which may be due to lack of proposal writing skills. It is also argued that due to the absence of organised networks to support women at the university; they miss out on available research funds and other opportunities (Anteneh, 2017:55; Meaza, 2009:10).

The process of promotion has often lacked transparency (Billene, 2018:9). This is aggravated by 'women not supporting fellow women.' This was confirmed by women who participated in the study, who indicated that the male peers were more supportive than fellow women when they applied for higher positions within their faculties. There is discrimination and marginalisation of women in all forms of leadership within the institutions. In this regard, Gobena (2014:29) argued that:

A new kind of academic leadership is needed; one that recognises the changed environment of higher education – in today's environment, senior administrators need to be both seasoned academics and entrepreneurs able to raise funds, not only from government but also from donors, business community, and ordinary citizens. This requires a keen understanding of finance, an outgoing and engaging personality, the gift of persuasion, patience, and at the same time a keen understanding of the academic process, teaching, research needs, and human relationships. Not all this can be taught, but much of it can be learnt through training and special courses for senior administrators.

According to Genet (2014:33), very few women with the right qualifications are inspired to take up such responsibilities. Sexual harassment is a reality for some women especially those in low ranks. Affected women are frequently intimidated to the extent that they often fail to assert themselves when aspiring to promotion.

There is a lack of knowledge about gender and its effect on career development among stakeholders in education in Ethiopia. This explains why the officials at the government offices do not take action to implement the affirmative-action policy introduced by the current government (MoE, 2013:12). On the other hand, female leaders who already hold

leadership positions and are well-qualified are a threat to other women who have the same qualifications, because they fear that they might be taken over their position, which epitomises the “Queen Bee Syndrome” in the HEIs.

Another serious problem with the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs is the lack of women’s associations or federations in many universities of the world (IFUW, 2015:87). Ethiopia is one of these countries with many universities without any women formations or federations although there are a number of women organisations rising in this country in different governmental and private sectors (MoWCYA, 2006:35).

Another barrier that prevents women from advancing is the lack of career planning (Catalyst, 2007:23). Women need to explore the future needs of the organisation in order to gain the appropriate job experiences. Succession planning is also needed in order to replace women when they leave. Scholars call this the ‘leaky pipeline’ problem where highly trained and qualified women are ascending into thin air, rather than high paying positions of authority (Stone, 2007:200). Other barriers are a lack of mentoring, the need for an appraisal and compensation systems that are uniform for men and women, and the impact of outdated corporate systems which were designed by men at a time when many women were not working (Hirut et al., 2004:10). There is a host of other reservations that people have about hiring and promoting women.

The barrier that may be most difficult to address is the lack of accountability towards managers in advancing women in the Ethiopian HEIs. Some men who lead organisations show reluctance to give women an opportunity to lead. Since advancement opportunities rely heavily on who you know and connect with, it is no surprise that leaders are often chosen by friends with similar backgrounds and worldviews, implying that men are hiring men. This has been referred to as the ‘good old boy’ system, which is difficult for external candidates to penetrate, no matter how qualified they are in the HEIs of Ethiopia (Dereje, 2009:60).

As Ryan and Haslam (2007:530) posited, women are likely to be placed in difficult leadership positions as defined by the glass cliff phenomenon for the following reasons:

“(a) sexism in the workplace; (b) women’s lack of support network; (c) the perceived mismatch of stereotypes associated with women and leaders; (d) the match between stereotypes associated with crisis management and women”. The complete sociological concern of the ‘glass cliff’ phenomenon to women’s leadership is not completely understood; and therefore, this type of gender inequity should be a major concern for the organisational leaders. Genet (2014:33) also revealed that women are victims of the above facts in Ethiopia.

The ‘glass cliff’ phenomenon, in light of leadership, was defined as placing women in unstable and uncertain leadership positions within an organisation (Ryan & Haslam, 2007:530). Men in the organisation labelled these unstable and uncertain leadership positions as difficult and undesirable. Placing women in ‘glass cliff’ positions can be a form of gender discrimination. Men and women have different and varying reactions to the phenomenon of the ‘glass cliff’. Women often acknowledge the unfair and demeaning treatment developed from the ‘glass cliff’ phenomenon, while men deny its existence and do not acknowledge the unfairness. Men explained the ‘glass cliff’ phenomenon as the woman’s inability to perform intricate leadership tasks and women’s differing leadership styles (Billene, 2018:9; Michelle, 1986:34).

Lack of leader breeders is another problem for the lack of women leaders in senior leadership positions in Ethiopia, according to Meaza (2009:10). Leader breeders are leaders who recruit high potentials, even if they are hard to handle. They do not go for the safe, conventional hires. Lack of mentors who are also leader breeders is another reason for lack of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs (Meaza, 2009:10). According to these authors, a leader breeder, unlike the leader blocker, has the emotional intelligence and uncanny sense required to attract, develop, and retain talent, regardless of their academic background. Such leaders also treat the failure of their subordinates as opportunities for training and give timely feedback and reward and reinforce the success of their followers (ibid.).

On the other hand, lack of effective training for leaders to mentor potential and newly appointed women leaders is another problem leading to lack of women leaders in senior positions in higher education (Msila, 2013:19). Lack of networking, mentoring, coaching,

sponsorship, up-skilling and informing leaders and managers about the value of diversity and inclusion of women leaders, lack of training for future leaders and failure to respond to the needs of a diverse staff and students are other institutional barriers (ibid.). This is true in Ethiopia and observed and practised highly according to (Anteneh, 2017; Genet, 2014:33).

For educators who aspire to leadership positions or have recently obtained positions as educational leaders, mentors are critical for job effectiveness (Coleman, 2009:13; de Santa Ana, 2008:24; Genet, 2014:33). Effective mentor-mentee relationships that incorporate a gender match are functional and can provide support for personal experiences with gender barriers. However, according to the above writers, many African universities have no such programmes including Ethiopia. According to CODESRIA (2012:20), the structure of many African universities including those in Ethiopia remain deliberately masculine, in terms of their representational structure, decision-making procedures and the culture of their members.

Another problem causing gender inequality at higher education institutions can be attributed to lack of strategies that bring about reorganisation and transformation of African HEIs including Ethiopia in a permanent way that opens up opportunities for career development and career advancement for women while recognising their multiple gender-specific roles (Mama, 2009:23; Bruktawit & Mengistu, 2018:151; Moodly & Toni, 2017:156). Shakeshaft (2009:103) and Cubillo and Brown (2003:278) also collectively submitted that the chief source of male hegemony lies not only in the psychological make-up of individuals but in the structure and operation of organisations like universities where women behave in limiting ways not only because they were socialised as women, but because of their presence in low power positions, low visibility, and boring jobs (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010:291). Similarly, Cubillo and Brown (2003:278) described the situation of women as the “outsiders inside” that is inside the institution but outside the “boys’ club”.

As mentioned by women’s affairs department (MoE, 2013:15), HEIs tend to have an organisational culture that does not allow for diversity, which in turn results in scarcity of women in leadership positions. Unfortunately, the hiring bodies too, consider women as less experienced or less prepared for leadership than men. The institutions like

universities are still patriarchal and tend to put women in the lower positions and favour men (Acker, 1998:299; Singh & Gojjam, 2015:12). Such institutions lack transparency and accountability in hiring and promoting (ibid.). Another serious problem for the underrepresentation of women in Ethiopian HEIs is that of the implicit male violence over women. Some scholars have argued that the major problem in academia is power, rather than gender per se, and that what is needed to solve the gender problem is to actualise the democratisation of the institution (Ronning, 2000:104). This is related to inequality in academia which cannot be gender-free.

Another important institutional problem is that most African universities (including Ethiopia) have no sensitive and functioning gender institutes within them that exhaustively understand the existing problems (CODESRIA, 2012:20). They further face challenges to conduct research, and to come up with solutions or findings to promote women leadership in higher positions. They are less encouraged to address transformative strategies linked to research, curriculum design, management and decision-making (ibid.). Challenges of deconstructing the complex existing dynamics of injustice and inequalities in higher education prevail while taking cognisance of the challenging environment according to CODESRIA.

A survey of university academic staff positions conducted in six universities (4 public and two private) reveals that women are missing in the top management positions of universities. In many universities, board councils, which determine the management of the university, are predominantly comprised of men (Anteneh, 2017:55; Billene, 2018:9). For example, at Wolaita Sodo University, out of four vice-presidents, none is female; out of 10 deans of colleges and schools, no one is a female; the situation at Hawasa University is the same, where out of 14 members of the management council, no one is female (Anteneh, 2017:55). This shows that women are missing from the major policy and decision-making forums of public universities in Ethiopia. This reflects that the recruitment and promotion policies of universities are still gendered and defective (Anteneh, 2017:55; MoE, 2013:15).

### **2.3.5 Economic Barriers for the Underrepresentation of Women in HEIs Leadership and /or Management**

In Ethiopia, as in most countries in the world, women spend more hours working per week than men do. However, for women, a larger proportion of time spent working is devoted to unpaid work – household chores, childcare, and other domestic activities that are not counted when economists try to quantify work (Schuler, 2010:n.p.; UN, 2012:67), and yet, women continue to face unique constraints on their economic activities, which are largely related to their roles and responsibilities in the household (World Bank, 2010:69). Otunga and Ojwang (2009:54) stressed that it is no matter whether a woman is professional or not – she has to perform the woman’s role in the home. This is related to the economic dependence of women in Ethiopia (Genet, 2014:33).

In expressing and strengthening the economic dependence, the role of women and undervaluation of their contribution in the globe, Cunningham and Sherman (2008:10) cited the UN which stated: “(1) Women perform 2/3 of the world’s work; (2) Women earn 1/10 of the world’s income; (3) Women are 2/3 of the world’s illiterate; (4) Women own less than 1/100 of the world property”.

Several economic factors such as poverty, limited access to education, inadequate infrastructure, limited income generation, limited opportunities and inadequate supportive economic policy environment affect women’s participation in education and educational leadership (Billene, 2018:9; Eagly & Carli, 2007:63; Manuh, 2007:45).

Another important factor is the marriage between the economic and social unequals – lack of companionate marriage. This is also true of the Ethiopian women (Genet, 2014:33). In this regard, Manuh (2007:45) argued that the issue of women’s plight is an issue of all humanity. A sizeable research data confirms that women constitute the majority of the poor and illiterate both in the rural and urban areas of Africa (including Ethiopia) (Manuh, 2007:45; Mekasha, 2017:29).

Women are segregated and discriminated against in many aspects in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. They do not enjoy equal benefits with men in many parts of Ethiopia while they contribute 57% of the economic activity, particularly in sub-Saharan region of Africa



(Genet, 2014:33; Manuh, 2007:45; Mekasha, 2017:29). The Ethiopian context is largely masculine in many organisational and societal aspects. The share of women in all areas of life is insignificant because of various factors that have existed for a long time in the country. Women in Ethiopia have suffered for many years from lack of access to ownership, leadership and decision-making opportunities.

## **2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter reviewed literature on the status of women leadership and/or management in Ethiopian HEIs and explored the feminist theory that is chosen as the theoretical framework of the study. The review looked at different scholars' perspectives on the status of women in leadership in HEIs and other levels in Ethiopia and abroad. The feminist theory was found to be the most important and relevant as it is premised on the need to emancipate women and to look thoroughly and deeply into the deep-rooted oppression of women. Accordingly, the concepts of feminist theories and feminism, supportive theories to feminism, and their contributions to women leadership in HEIs were discussed extensively. From this, it emerged that scholars have been defining and categorising feminism differently since the 1970s though almost all revolve around the oppression of women. Different types and branches of feminism focusing on the emancipation of women from the likely oppressions and to advance them to power were also discussed.

African feminism, black feminism, liberal feminism, and radical feminism together with Fagenson's model were reviewed thoroughly. African feminism and black feminism traced the beginning of the women's struggle, the experience, strengths, qualities, and oppressions of black women (most probably with African origin), and how they paved the way later for the later struggles and emancipation. It also emerged that different types of feminism have made notable contributions to the emancipation and empowering of women (Tong, 2013:456). For instance, it is evident that liberal and radical feminisms are still important branches of feminism in that they emphasise human rights, democracy, and constitutionalism and consolidation of democracy, and limitations on the power of the government (Epstein, 1990:50; Shackleton, 2006:575).

The feminist theory arose from the feminist movement that embraced the idea of empowering women and sought to define gender and the role it plays in the power dynamics (Burchill, 2009:237). Finally, it is evident from the chapter that all the branches and types of feminism have contributed to the discourse on the advancement of women in general and in senior leadership positions in HEIs in particular. The next chapter presents the global experiences in empowering women in leadership positions of HEIs.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter dealt with the theoretical framework of the study and empirical evidence to achieve the purpose of the current qualitative study. It dealt with the concepts, branches and waves of the feminist theories, and the Fagenson's model which is supportive to women leadership and the feminist theory which is the theoretical framework. It also explored the factors that contributed to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in the public HEIs of south Ethiopia.

According to the reports of the Ethiopian public HEIs, the senior leadership positions are still occupied or dominated by men though as some research findings, having gender-diverse points of view in senior /or executive leadership positions yields a wider and better approach to decision-making (Catalyst, 2007:8; MoE, 2013:10). In light of this, Ulman (1996:505) also acknowledged that women are needed at the top leadership positions and that gender diversity should be part of transformation in senior positions.

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of women leadership in HEIs globally. The first section presents an overview of women leadership while the second sub-topic deals with women and educational leadership. The third section provides an overview of HEIs and women leadership in four selected African countries. Here, both the practices and challenges encountered there are dealt with. The fourth section addresses the leadership qualities associated with both men and women respectively. The fifth section deals with the significance of empowering women and the benefits of the gender diversity in leadership of HEIs. The sixth section deals with women's supportive management styles and approaches to leadership. The last section of the chapter deals with the measures undertaken by different nations, HEIs, and organisations to promote women to senior leadership positions.

It is evident that HEIs have social significance globally (Coombs, 2014:45). They are great storehouses of trained, informed, inquiring and critical intellectuals, and the indispensable means of replenishing national talent. They have considerable reserves of leadership and commitment from which to draw. If they are impoverished, dilapidated, frustrated, and overcrowded, they have no substitutes (Coombs, 2014:45; MoE, 2013:15). Higher education is a lynchpin of the knowledge economy of the twenty-first century. Therefore, according to the above sources, without a vibrant higher education sector, countries cannot effectively innovate and compete in the global knowledge economy. In this regard, the importance of this sector goes well beyond the creation of wealth through knowledge and innovation. Furthermore, this century is driven by social values and the higher education sector makes no less of a contribution to the enlightenment of society today than it has done for centuries. Thus, in order to achieve the above goals, leadership diversity and equality between men and women are key social values of the millennium globally (Chliwniak, 1997:30; World Bank, 2014:55). In order to achieve such broader goals of HEIs, there is a need for leadership diversity of both women and men as they possess distinctive leadership styles and other qualities (Catalyst, 2013:15; MoE, 2013:15).

Despite the importance and distinct qualities of their leadership, women are still underrepresented in HEIs in South Ethiopia (MoE, 2013:15). To explore this further, different strands of literature are reviewed in the next section.

### **3.2 WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP**

Historically, everywhere, women have not been recognised as being strong and competent leaders although there have been a number of women in leadership positions who have left a valuable and lasting contribution to society (Percupchick, 2011:41). Bias, stereotypes and prejudice are part of human nature and they have always been there. Men have adopted more positive perceptions of other male leaders than of female leaders. An organisation's greatest resource is human knowledge and the talent that makes use of it (Percupchick, 2011:41). A significant part of an organisation's resources, namely, women are misunderstood (particularly, regarding their performance as leaders),

and they are usually measured and benchmarked against male performance criteria and behaviour (Helgesen & Williams, 1990:39; Tsegay, 2013:75).

The above scenario seems to be true in the context of Ethiopian. Here, the real issue in leadership difference lies in the equity in selecting the right person with the appropriate skills and qualities to ensure the effectiveness and success of the organisation (Bass & Avolio, 2012:207; Tsegay, 2013:75). It has been argued that the integration of women in leadership roles is not a matter of “fitting in” the traditional models, but “giving” them opportunities to practise their own leadership styles. Since leadership roles have been mostly occupied by men, some women have chosen successful male leaders as their role models (Appelbaum, 2003:43; Tsegay, 2013:75).

Recognising women’s leadership represents an important approach to equity as long as they are not stereotyped as the ways women lead but as other ways of leading. The feminine leadership styles are not better or worse than the traditional male-oriented ones, but they are different. According to Shakeshaft (2009:103):

The point of examining these differences is not to say one approach is right and the other is wrong, but rather to help us to understand that men and women may be from very different perspectives and that if we fail to understand these differences, we are not likely to work well together with others.

Literature on leadership and women describes feminine leadership styles as interpersonal, charismatic and democratic (Eagly & Karau, 2002:573; Tsegay, 2013:75), and related to gender because of stereotypes of women as being sensitive, warm, tactful and expressive (Olsson & Walker, 2003:7; Tsegay, 2013:75). Earlier thinking emphasised that women who had achieved leadership positions were imitators of male characteristics but contemporary theories recognise feminine leadership style. Women face many barriers that prevent them from being considered leaders or leadership candidates (Trinidad & Normore, 2005:584). In the next section, the concept of leadership in general and educational leadership in particular to frame the discussion on women leadership in senior leadership positions of HEIs in South Ethiopia is presented.

### **3.3 WOMEN AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

In spite of an increasing association of teaching role with women globally, their presence is conspicuously low in senior educational leadership positions across countries and cultures (Shah & Shah, 2012:33). There are some broadly shared factors such as gender-power relations, role stereotyping, role socialisation, public versus domestic attitude of the society leading to such phenomenon. However, it is easy to assume that these factors are socially constructed and enacted in relatively similar ways across cultures and societies (Shah & Shah, 2012:33). The prevalent cultural systems and social patterns of behaviour determine the discourse shaping the concepts and contexts of each situation. On the other hand, educational leadership is a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of schools and other educational organisations like HEIs (Bush, 2008:271).

There is a great interest in this educational leadership in this early part of the twenty-first century. This is because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to student outcomes and institutions (Bolam & Turner, 1998:375). According to Collinson and Collinson (2006:186), it is almost impossible to traverse the very many and contested conceptualisations of leadership in general and educational leadership in particular.

It is sufficient here for the sake of this study to identify two important aspects of leadership in education. The first is that of providing direction, organisational vision, and making related decisions about resource allocations and distributions. Leaders achieve this in a variety of ways, using different approaches and styles of leadership (Collinson & Collinson, 2006:186; Morreli, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012:21). These leadership styles use different sources of power and impact differently on the levels and extent to which staff consider themselves as making a contribution to organisational decision-making. Both the quality and extent of staff participation in decision-making tends to wane as we move across the continuum from laissez-faire to autocratic leadership styles according to the above sources.

The second aspect of leadership is the issue of control and exerting influence. Both aspects of leadership involve power and the ability to obtain, retain and move resources

(Collinson & Collinson, 2006:186). Accordingly, power can be used to enforce decisions and ends that may be desired or undesired by particular individuals or groups. Power can also be shared with the group so that members can have equal participation in decision-making (both men and women). Variations in power distributions in decision-making are foundational to the development of numerous concepts of leadership according to (Brunner, 2002:221). Accordingly, for leaders in contemporary educational institutions, selecting optimum decision-making processes in an increasingly heterogeneous context has become a central concern (ibid).

The question of gender in education began to intrigue research and policy attention over the last four decades. This interest was triggered by the desire to reduce gender disparity in education by promoting equal educational opportunities for women and men. Despite the advocacy and some promising scenarios, gender disparity in education still favours men in many countries of the world, particularly in Africa according to (Bunyi, 2004:13; Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), 2015:8).

The low participation of girls in tertiary education in Africa is attributed to many factors which include social and structural impediments such as sexual harassment and gender-unaware institutional structures and leadership (FAWE, 2015:8). In line with this, gender disparity in education in Ethiopia has started to attract the attention of the government very recently in spite of its prevalence across several educational areas (Alemu, 2003:113; Merga, 2016:13). The higher the educational ladder, the wider the gender disparity in favour of men (including leadership positions) (Merga, 2016:13; MoE, 2013:11). Nevertheless, the forms and sources of gender disparity in countries, including Ethiopia, HEIs have received inadequate research consideration (Merga, 2016:13; MoE, 2013:15)

### **3.4 AN OVERVIEW OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA**

HEIs are established essentially to provide quality educational services to enhance the living standard of people in any society (Ogbogu & Bisiriyu, 2012:4751). To achieve these objectives, competent employees and leaders whether men or women are needed as HEIs are believed to be liberal and open institutions geared to supporting the pursuit of

knowledge and encouraging the principles of democracy and social justice particularly as it relates to governance. In order to realise such objectives, according to Gbervbie et al. (2014:101), availability of quality management and/or leadership in terms of skills, education and experience that avoid gender discrimination of any kind determines organisational effectiveness. However, there is a natural gender role distinction all over the world, which has created gaps in opportunities between men and women (Gobena, 2014:10; Nwajiuba, 2011:926). Olaogun, Adebayo and Oluyemo (2015:294) also argued that though gender discrimination in HEIs is a worldwide phenomenon, it is more common in Africa with its patriarchal traditions that have serious repercussions for HEIs. The Ethiopian HEIs are also found to be subject to such problems (Genet, 2014:38).

Studies conducted by the World Bank (2013:107) on African HEIs also indicated that the majority of senior management positions were held by men in ninety percent (90%) of African HEIs. This section, therefore, deals with the practices of four African countries: Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda. These countries were chosen based on the significant number of women in high academic ranks that is, the number of female professors since 2000. According to Morley (2014:114), these countries were found to be relatively better in sub-Saharan Africa in promoting women to the higher academic ranks. Accordingly, the status of women leadership in HEIs of each country, the challenges and practices of each country in promoting and empowering in HEIs are discussed in the following sections.

### **3.4.1 Higher Education and Women Leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and Practices**

Nigeria is a West African country and became an independent state within the British Commonwealth in 1960 (African Union [UN], 1963:159). It is the most populous country in Africa where men and women often experience different opportunities, conditions and privileges; they earn different wages, do not have the same access to education and are not always equal before the law (African Development Bank, 2015:30). In fact, it was evident in Nigeria that over the past decades, the presence and status of women in paid employment has been improved significantly (ibid). However, the progression of professional women into positions of leadership in HEIs and/or leadership in Nigeria has



been slow (Ogbogu & Bisiriyu, 2012:4751). Exclusion and discrimination of women from participation in major decision-making processes has been documented there (Adegun, 2012:250; Aina, Ogunlade & Ilesanmi, 2015:314).

Globally (including Nigeria), there are relatively few women in senior management positions in workplaces in HEIs (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Olaleye, 2011:19). Recent data from the commonwealth HEIs have indicated that women comprised only 24% of full-time academic staff – that may be because of the available pool of potential leaders of the HEIs in Nigeria. Egunjobi (2008) attributed this gender equity gap to the fact that, like most occupations, academic profession at the beginning of modern times was a single sex profession for men.

While the underrepresentation of women in the HEIs senior leadership positions remains a challenge across the globe, the situation in Nigerian HEIs appears to be particularly challenging – with patriarchal practices having serious manifestations in institutions of higher learning (Olaogun et al., 2015:294). Available evidence has shown that in Nigerian HEIs women constitute only 13.6 % of academic staff, compared to the global figure of 41% (ibid). This is still a small percentage though is relatively better than some African countries such as Ghana 9.5%, Tanzania 11.0%, and Zimbabwe 9.8% (Olaogun et al., 2015:294). Historically, senior management and leadership positions in Nigeria (as in other African countries) have always carried the notion of masculinity and the belief that men make the better managers and leaders than women (Kiamba, 2008:33).

Thus, traditional African societies including Nigeria have always recognised men as leaders and managers and their leadership roles and behaviours in war, hunting, in business and government (Gobena, 2014:14; Panigrahi, 2013:11). It is, therefore, not surprising that the traditional societal conventions regarding gender and management have always excluded women (Madsen, 2011:3). In Nigeria, as in many African cultures, men are believed to lead and women are expected to follow (Kiamba, 2008:33). It is culturally acceptable in rural Nigerian villages that men literally walk ahead of women. The gender equity gaps in HEIs management and/or leadership in Nigeria are linked to pre-colonial patriarchal arrangements whereby occupational skills within the family are

transmitted mostly to boys, while skills relating to reproductive functions are transmitted to girls (Aina et al., 2015:314).

In Nigeria, most people are still reluctant to accept women for senior management/or leadership positions, despite the fact that they are qualified. In this economy, a wide range of customs, traditions and cultural stereotypes are used to justify exclusions of women from negotiating tables (Porter, 2007:10). Thus, female participation in policy-making bodies in the Nigerian HEIs system is very limited. Ogbogu and Bisiriyu (2012:4751) also argued that though women in Nigerian HEIs hold about 35% of academic posts, however, they are mainly represented in lower, precarious, and mid-level academic and administrative positions. According to Porter (2007:9), women participation relative to men decreases at higher levels. Aina et al. (2015:314) attributed the poor representation of female professors and female chief lecturers in senior leadership and/or management positions to patriarchy. This assertion is supported by the observation that since the establishment of the first university in Nigeria in 1948, only 12 women have so far occupied the position of university Vice-Chancellor in over 138 Federal, state and private universities (The Punch News, 2015:3). However, since a number of women have already assumed these senior/top leadership positions, more women could be attracted to these top positions of leadership and/or management.

Over the years, the issues relating to the discrimination against and exclusion of women from major decision-making processes and the persistent inequalities in dominant organisations of knowledge production have been central points of discussion in many national, regional and international forums (Olaogun et al., 2015:294). These forums sought opportunities for women to contribute meaningfully to development and to become part of policy-making bodies (ibid). These concerns have also received much attention by the United Nations and its specialised agencies (ibid). The principle of equality of men and women was recognised in 1945 in the United Nations charter, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. However, many global conferences, such as the Cairo conference on Population and Development (1994:25), the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women (1995) and World Summit for Social Development (1995), have observed that despite the progress made globally in improving the status of women, gender disparities

still exist, especially in regard to participation in executive positions in most African countries, including Nigeria (ibid.).

A programme to examine the problem of the small numbers of women in policy-making positions and top executive posts was initiated at a meeting in Toronto in 1985 by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). As a follow-up, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU, 2010:n.p.) and CIDA held local workshops in Bombay, India in 1986 and 1988 to train potential women leaders in the skills of university management. The Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1998), the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations 2000) and the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (2004) and recently, the National Universities Commission (NUC) have also made attempts to integrate human rights and equity issues into structural reforms of Nigeria's higher education system, so as to correct structural imbalances and ensure gender equality in the university system (Gberevbie et al., 2014:101; Olaogun, 2015:294). All these were devised to help eliminate gender inequality in human society including Nigeria.

Although Nigeria is a signatory to many of these international declarations, in establishing the legal rights and equality of men and women, available literature suggests that the number of women occupying HEI senior management positions is still low, as most of the senior management positions are occupied by men (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Olaleye, 2011:19).

### **3.4.2 Higher Education and Women Leadership in South Africa: Challenges and Practices**

South Africa is one of the African countries that attained independence from Great Britain in 1952 though the apartheid system only ended in 1994 (Mandela, 1994). According to Zulu (2013:750), in the past years women and the disadvantaged groups were not involved in top management at corporate organisations. However, currently, South African HEIs are striving to be non-sexist and non-racist (Priola, 2007:21).

According to Ramphela (1996), universities should address institutional cultures which are awash with gender-based power constructs that contribute towards keeping women out of HEI leadership, while accepting that employment equity legislation provides a good framework to eliminate racism and sexism from society. She highlighted how they are often blind to the subtler forms of discrimination which pervade their institutional cultures (Zulu, 2013:750). She concluded that all must acknowledge that the South African society has a strong sexist, racist and authoritarian culture. She submitted that power in South Africa should be redefined away from the control model to an enabling model for the leadership or management of aspiring women. In this regard, Machika (2014:15) also noted that South African universities often state their commitment to equity in their vision and mission statements, but their results, e.g., in annual reports, indicate a failure to understand how the subtle forms of discrimination in institutional cultures create barriers to women's success.

According to Machika (2014:15), HEIs are urged not to ignore the wealth of women leadership available in their institutions and cautioned that failure to do so could lead to institutions missing out on at least 50% of the women's skills needed. She further emphasised that it is not only the task of HEI management or broader society to effect change, but that women themselves have a responsibility to make their voices heard, show their faces and support one another.

With regard to the number of postgraduate students and staff in South African universities, the number of postgraduate women has been decreasing (particularly at doctoral level) (Lay & Daley, 2007:50). The reasons put forward for this are the unfavourable work-life balance and disempowering institutional cultures. Although many South African HEIs have mission statements, equity plans and targets, equity officers and resources to address the issues of recruitment, retention and success of black and female students in general, there appears to be little that specifically targets postgraduate women. The reason for this could possibly be that for most institutions, recruitment and retention of diverse staff are not considered to be key performance indicators (ibid).

Retention and development of junior female researchers is another problem in South Africa (Zulu, 2013:20). In order to encourage more women to participate in postgraduate

studies and to retain them in the institution, well-structured post-doctoral programmes for female academics with clear objectives and deliverables and sufficient mentoring and networking opportunities need to be created. According to Zulu, women in academe, in South Africa, frequently use metaphors such as: “a battle to be fought”, “a chilly climate” and a “glass ceiling” to describe their work experiences. In South Africa, although legislation and policies address the issue of gender equity in the workplace, implementation is a problem and women report gender discrimination despite the policy changes. This is the result of a lack of understanding of the complexity of gender discrimination in institutions and has been termed the “opaqueness” of the “glass ceiling” (ibid).

An example of discrimination is the vagueness of “merit” as a criterion for selection of staff. If understanding of good leadership is based on constructs of masculinity, this influences understanding of merit according to the above researcher. This indicates that there is a problem in the pipeline while recruiting and retaining women postgraduate students who are likely to be the source of potential female leaders in senior positions in HEIs in South Africa, but do not somehow make the grade for selection. Botha (2007:15) suggested that “the commitment of HEIs leadership is the single most important factor to ensure race and gender equity in the institutions”. Accordingly, the solution does not lie only in redefining the selection criteria but in changing the minds and perceptions of people making the appointments. In this regard, the roles of heads of HEIs are particularly important. The duty of all is to express outrage and apply pressure when committees show disdain for applicants based on race and gender.

In order to improve the participation of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs in South Africa, a number of measures have been taken (Botha, 2007:21). The government has been sincerely committed to the issue of gender equity, though the progress towards equity in HEIs has been slow and believes that the problem does not lie with lack of policy, but in the extent to which policy is integrated into decision-making. In terms of staff composition, the Department of Higher Education (DHET) has initiatives to target women researchers through donor funding and focusing on scarce skills. However, the equity challenges remain, and it will be the institutional leaders who will effect most change (ibid).

On the other hand, Higher Education South Africa (HESA) is a united body of more than 23 public universities (ibid). It has three key roles: advocacy, sector support and strategic research (ibid). The Women in Higher Education Executive Leadership (WHEEL) Programme offers leadership and management development opportunities to women in senior positions and explore possible future interventions by HESA (ibid). Among other things, WHEEL is a conduit for the members' wishes by putting pressure on vice-chancellors and senior managers; establishing a community of practice of those who work in the development of women in the HEIs; developing a set of best practices; identifying aspects of institutional culture that act as barriers to women liaising with HERS-SA in offering workshops for women managers; facilitating bringing equity issues before councils and other levels of senior management; and cooperating with the DHET to ensure a better flow of information about women managers.

According to Shackleton (2006:572), HERS-SA is a managed network that aims to improve the gender equity amongst the leadership in HEIs. Its activities include academy lobbying, research, networking, and the provision of focused workshops on demand. It provides professional development for women across South Africa and other African countries. In the same country, according to Budree (2008:16), the University of KwaZulu-Natal has several externally funded programmes aimed at the development of women students and staff. These include: lectureship, graduate scholarship, teaching relief for blacks and women on the cusp of promotion, women in leadership leverage and so on.

Botha (2007:31) also states that the CHE is often faced with gender equity challenges in the areas of monitoring and quality assurance. In monitoring, the CHE has made gender a dimension of its statistical analysis and can thus map the gender profiles of institutions, particularly at the staff level. Research has been carried out on the impact of institutional culture on student success and it has shown that the gendered culture significantly influences such success (ibid).

Kele and Pietersen (2015:11) stated that after the announcement of mergers, South African HEIs underwent serious transformational changes in line with legislative requirements and policies. Among others, the changes insisted on the need to appoint more women in positions of authority (Sebola, 2009:1102). The kind of leadership that is

depicted in organisations from different sectors and industries has been the focal point for many researchers. Thus, the ascension of women to managerial positions could be used to test if indeed this doctrine holds (Yanez & Moreno, 2008:5). In South Africa, women have always been in the second stratum of society, regardless of their race (Mathur-Helm, 2005:56). To counter this unfair practice, the government enacted the affirmative-action legislation as part of the national strategy to redress the imbalances of the past. Thus, women concerns came to the fore both within government departments and the corporate sector. Matters like equality, human rights, empowerment and welfare received immense attention. With the help from Gender Policy Framework, policies aimed at addressing the imbalances of the past were drafted and signed into laws (ibid). Included in this process was the drafting of procedures and practices aimed at ensuring that women are afforded equal opportunities in all sectors of the South African economy (Mathur-Helm, 2005:56). Furthermore, in South Africa, HESA drew up a national plan to:

- Commit to identify institutional barriers to equity of participation and success in leadership and undertake innovative ways of addressing these impediments.
- Initiate annual monitoring and reporting to university councils on gender equity across senior positions.
- Undertake an examination of university employment policies and their implementation, particularly as they impact on senior leadership positions.
- Promote and monitor fair and effective representation of women on senior committees and external bodies to which the university nominates members or representatives.
- Facilitate women's participation in leadership development initiatives.
- Promote a holistic, integrated, and sustained approach to gender equity.

Research has highlighted the need to eliminate all kinds of discriminatory practices that hinder women's progress in the HEIs environment (Hames, 2018:10). The University of the Western Cape has a dedicated Gender Equity Unit (GEU) that was established in 1993 (Hames, 2018:10). The focus of GEU is to eradicate all inequalities that form barriers to the advancement of women within the university (Hames, 2018:10). For the first time in the history of the university, women were appointed in positions previously reserved for men. Women became deputy vice-chancellors, registrars, executive directors and

directors, deans and deputy deans of faculties. Currently women occupy four of the six university executive positions. However, there remain positions that have never been occupied by women. The implementation of sexual harassment, gender, and non-sexist language policies have enhanced the promotion of women.

### **3.4.3 Higher Education and Women Leadership in Ghana: Challenges and Practices**

Ghana is a West African state situated on the Gulf of Guinea and attained independence in 1957 from Great Britain (African Union (AU), 1963:93). Many Ghanaians believe in the proclamation “if you educate a man, you educate an individual; if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.” However, this does not reflect women’s actual involvement in higher education in general and in senior leadership positions in particular (Adusah-Karikari, 2008:203). A study conducted on gender issues at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana revealed that women academics had low statistical and political visibility and, their concerns and needs within the workplace were not discussed (Adusah-Karikari, 2008:203; Prah, 2002). With regard to female university students (who are the likely pools for the potential women leaders), Prah (2002) concluded that there was anecdotal evidence about women students who were intimidated by their peers (particularly men) when they decided to stand for senior position at the HEIs. Furthermore, the HEIs have no GEU or special departments to handle gender discrimination issues, reflecting some of the challenges that Ghanaian women face at the HEIs.

The status of Ghanaian women is shaped by cultural/societal norms and the legacies of colonialism for colonialists were biased in favour of boys, rather than girls, for schooling when they needed to train Africans to help them run the colonial governments. For instance, when the first school for girls was opened in Ghana, the aim of the missionaries who ran it was to groom young women to become fit wives for the men they were training. In this regard, Van Allen in Adusah-Karikari (2008:57), traced sex differential education in Africa to colonialism as:

... when they needed literate Africans to form a supportive mediating structure for colonial governments, they sought young boys for schooling. Even when girls were sent to mission schools, they often were not taught the same subjects. Girls’ “training homes” taught some “domestic science” and the Bible in vernacular.



As noted in the above excerpt, it can be concluded that inequality in education in Ghana is rooted in colonialism and the existing educational inequalities are the ripple effects of this. Prah (2002) further asserted that the Ghanaian HEIs are male-dominated and that the women within them, namely, academics, administrators, support staff, and students, face major obstacles because of lack of attention to their specific needs and problems.

Adusah-Karikari (2008:203) also contended that women have suffered disproportionately from the lack of a sound secondary education and even if they managed to gain places as undergraduates, their prospects for professional employment were poor.

According to the aforementioned source, HEIs in Ghana perpetuate a sexist division of labour in a sense that men hold the majority of senior and high positions, and women predominate in lower-paid, insecure jobs (*ibid*). Typically, these gendered patterns occur also in other aspects of the HEIs such as the committees, staffing patterns, and informal lobbying groups. Currently there is no evidence of women who have held the position of a university Vice-Chancellor (president) in the country which shows that top-level positions in Ghanaian HEIs are gendered (*ibid*). Although there are a few women who are senior lecturers and deans of academic colleges, not very much information was known about their experiences at the HEIs in Ghana (Adusah-Karikari, 2008:203). Although patriarchy existed in the early Ghanaian society, colonialism reinforced an already existing phenomenon and legitimised it in the new social order developed during and after colonialism. Accordingly, that has exacerbated the issue (*ibid*).

According to Dine (1988:311), Ghana had faced a number of challenges to achieve targets of gender equality and empowerment of women: lack of competing government priorities and will, weak gender mainstreaming, conceptual clarification of gender equality in the public sector, socio-cultural, traditional beliefs and socialisation, inadequate basic social services, and weak informal gender equality and women empowerment mechanism. Knights (2014:65) further noted that there are challenges like limited attention given to women aspiring to leadership, violence against women, lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems, weak strategic gender partnerships, low representation of women in politics, discriminatory customary practices, and slow implementation and enforcement of law. He further argued that there is limited access to

justice, limited access to land and other productive resources, problems related with health, limited access to decent wage and livelihoods. Finally, he added that limited support of the media to women empowerment, the presence of weak accountable and responsible management, and governance of the HEIs and government are major challenges in Ghana regarding empowering women (Adusah-Karikari, 2008:110). Next, the Ugandan experience is dealt with regarding challenges and practices of empowering women in HEIs.

#### **3.4.4 Higher Education and Women Leadership in Uganda: Challenges and Practices**

Uganda is an East African country and attained independence from Great Britain in 1962 (AU, 1963:213). Uganda has a relatively high female enrolment rate in HEIs. However, there is a mismatch when it comes to female leadership and/or management in HEIs and access to subjects like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Dranzoa, 2018:5). The number of female professors and female-headed HEIs in Uganda is limited. For instance, according to Dranzoa (2018:5) and Mugambua and Mwebeza (2017:10), currently, there are only three female vice-chancellors in 41 Ugandan HEIs. Contextually, gender equity in higher education leadership and women's empowerment is mandated by international, regional, and national legal frameworks, ratified by most governments including Uganda (Dranzoa, 2018:5; Mugambua & Mwebeza, 2017:10).

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms of 1948, the African Union Gender Policy (2009:30), and the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) provide a legal framework to ensure gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups on all constitutional and other bodies including women. For instance, the Gender in Education Policy (2009) of Uganda provides a framework for the implementation and monitoring of a gender-sensitive and responsive education system at all levels of education as a fundamental human right. This policy further requires HEIs to address gender gaps, and mainstream strategies to address existing gender imbalances. In this regard, both the African Union and Uganda's national legal frameworks and policies are in line with the global ones though there are still problems with implementing the policies (Dranzoa, 2018:5; Mugambua & Mwebeza, 2017:10).

In Uganda, most women are socialised into “acceptable” behaviours for an African woman (Knights, 2014:17). As such, their leadership potential remains underdeveloped. In this regard, scholars such as the Vice-Chairperson of Makerere University Council, Irene Ovungi (2017:39), asserted “women often are less confident, thanks to negative socialisation, have fewer female role models, and fewer support systems/or networks. Women who do not conform to stereotypes are often get penalised, or sanctioned, mocked, not respected, disliked, passed over for promotion” (Dranzoa, 2018:5; Mugambua & Mwebeza, 2017:15). Gender-stereotyped behaviours, displayed by society and lack of support were disempowering women from pursuing their dreams even when they qualify. Those who dared to stand for leadership positions were edged out of the competition because men often saw power, influence and money rather than services according to Lubaale (2020:10) and UNDP (2011:30). Women leaders were wrongly perceived as weaklings and attracting critical judgements and mockery. Very few women who saw this negative treatment on fellow women were prepared to be subjected to similar humiliation (Dranzoa, 2018:5; Mugambua & Mwebeza, 2017:15).

The process for leadership career development in HEIs of Uganda was structured, lengthy and merit-based. Once recruited, the next hurdle is in academic growth and development from master’s to PhD and post-doctoral level in an often under-resourced environment (lacking funds, power, research equipment, infrastructure and so on) (Mugambua & Mwebeza, 2017:15). A Ugandan career woman must struggle to write research proposals for grants or pay for their graduate education themselves because the government does not finance graduate studies. As a result, more women drop out in the middle of their academic careers compared to their male counterparts (Dranzoa, 2018:5; Mugambua & Mwebeza, 2017:15).

Dropouts can be due to financial, reproductive or social constraints. Some are easily discouraged from elective leadership positions due to the abrasive social stresses associated with campaigns. Where there is no strong family support, women face tough choices for either career development or raising families. In this sense, academic career development for most women in Uganda happens in a “pulse” manner contributing heavily to the “leaking pipe” according to UNDP (2011:30). Therefore, the limited number of

gender champions and role models discourage women from daring to take up leadership positions in HEIs in Uganda. As such, most women in Uganda were found in lower-paying, non-powerful, mid-, and lower-level posts in the HEIs (Dranzoa, 2018:5; UNESCO, 2002:35). However, according to Dranzoa (2018:5), Makerere University (one of the pioneer universities in Uganda and East Africa), together with the Swedish International Development Association (SIDA), did commendable work to tackle the problem of empowering women in HEIs and other sectors as follows:

- 1) Established the department of women and gender studies that could award MA-PhD degrees in gender studies in sub-Saharan African regions in East Africa though later on other universities of East Africa too, did it;
- 2) Provided short courses on gender at both national and regional level;
- 3) Ensured gender-sensitivity in the governance and administration of Makerere University;
- 4) Both men and women were made to share responsibility and enjoy the benefits equitably;
- 5) A series of gender awareness workshops for the top management of the university was given (Dranzoa, 2018:6).

The next section discusses the leadership qualities of male and women.

### **3.5 WOMEN AND MEN LEADERSHIP QUALITIES**

The difference in gendered leadership has been given emphasis on the different qualities and styles of leadership of men and women – the so-called masculine and feminine leadership styles (Cubillo & Brown, 2003:278). While men still dominate leadership positions, many findings indicate that when women occupy leadership positions they display different leadership styles from men. The presence of feminine or masculine characteristics in leadership styles is related to the construct of gender (Genet, 2014:33; Meaza, 2009:10). These authors have related masculinity with task-oriented leadership style and femininity with relationship-oriented leadership styles. Male gender qualities are characterised as aggressive, independent, objective, logical, rational, analytical, decisive, confident, assertive, ambitious, opportunistic, and impersonal (ibid). These are

distinguished from female gender qualities that are characterised as emotional, sensitive, expressive, cooperative, intuitive, warm, tactful, receptive to ideas, talkative, gentle, empathetic, and submissive (Genet, 2014:33; Meaza, 2009:10).

In contrast to the above discussion, some scholars argue that there are no significant differences in leadership styles between men and women. For instance, Powell (2004:68) found that male and female leaders exhibit similar amounts of task-oriented and people-oriented leadership characteristics. Furthermore, in citing a number of studies undertaken by a number of researchers, Pounder (2001:288) summarised the idea of 'little or no difference' and no evidence for any dissimilarity in the leadership styles and behaviours in United Kingdom managers. Their study found that women managers delegate less than their male counterparts but their directive, consultative and participative leadership styles were similar. There were more similarities than differences found in their studies. However, authors suggested that, although women are relatively similar to men in behaviour and effectiveness, women leaders tend to be more participative and less autocratic (Genet, 2014:33; Powell, 2004:68).

Furthermore, the notion of male and female gender qualities facilitates the argument that male gender qualities are oriented towards the more impersonal, task-oriented or transactional approach to leadership, whereas female gender qualities tend towards more nurturing, relationship-oriented style of leadership that underlie the transformational leadership approach (Coleman, 2009:13). According to Rigg and Sparrow (2009:101), female leaders emphasise the team approach more than men and are regarded as more people-oriented than their male counterparts, while male leaders are considered more paternalistic and authoritarian than female leaders. The empowering and collaborative style of leadership associated with women is also compared with the more directive and authoritarian style traditionally associated with male leaders. In other words, women seem to lead in a rather democratic way, while men show a more autocratic leadership style (Eagly & Karau, 2002:573).

Women are also said to be better than men in terms of multi-tasking that is said to be characteristic of women (Priola, 2004:421). This means that women are better at managing different activities simultaneously. In this regard, Priola (2004:421) identified

the four major discourses that refer to aspects generally associated with femininity when identifying female traits within educational institutions. These are: the ability to manage multi-tasks (including administration); people and communication skills; the ability to focus on support and care for the staff; and the implementation of a team-based approach rather than an authoritarian style approach. In this regard, the ability to juggle several activities at once is one of the differences between women and men (Deem, 2003:239).

Moreover, according to Catalyst (2013:15), women's central involvement in managing households, raising children, and juggling careers gives them a capacity for prioritisation in a leadership role that men typically do not possess. Women are often carers of the family and the household in addition to external employment. They are also good at interpersonal and communication skills. Women managers put effort into building relationships and understanding the people they work with, so that they can adapt their style to each individual (Rosener, 1990:119).

They also found through their study that women use "interactive leadership" styles by encouraging participation, sharing power and information, and enhancing people's self-worth. They further justified that women are much more likely than men to ascribe their power to interpersonal skills or personal contacts rather than to organisational stature. As leaders, women believe that people perform best when they feel good about themselves and their work, and the leaders try to create situations that contribute to that feeling. Studies indicate that women who achieved and assumed the leadership positions earlier were imitators of male characteristics, but later theories recognised their feminine leadership styles (Rosener, 1990:119). Research into the feminisation of management suggested that contemporary managers should move towards substituting the "masculine power" of decision-making, giving orders and being obeyed, with the power to give others (the workforce) sustenance, nurture their growth and care for them (Fondas, 2009:257; Hirut et al., 2004:8). The next section deals with the significance of women leadership and diversity in HEIs.

### **3.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

According to Machika (2014:), having a more diverse leadership team helps avoid stereotypical thinking and encourages a dynamic mix of perspectives and approaches which leads to better leadership. Albert Einstein, cited in Perschel (2009:133) said, “The significant problems we face today cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them”. This indicates that both women and men together can bring a different way of thinking, a cooperative spirit, a gift for ‘reading’ people, patience, empathy, networking abilities, negotiating skills, a drive to nurture children, kin, business connections, the local and world community, an interest in ethnic diversity and education, a keen imagination, a win-win attitude, mental flexibility, an ability to embrace ambiguity, and the predisposition to examine complex social, environmental, and political issues with a broad, contextual, long-term view (Perschel, 2009:133).

As more women move into certain sectors of the economy, stereotypes may be evolving in ways that create a more level playing field for women who aspire to leadership positions (Tinuke, 2011:389). Diverse leadership offers organisations a competitive advantage and is a source of strength and prosperity for organisations (Catalyst, 2013:15; Eboiyehi, Fayomi & Eboiyehi, 2016:185). There is a growing body of research that highlights the benefit of workplace diversity in general and the specific benefits of diversity of gender in leadership in the HEIs. Improved financial and organisational performance; better connected domestic and global markets; recruitments from global and domestic labour pools; increased creativity and innovations; and enhanced social inclusions are some of the benefits of diversified leadership (Catalyst, 2013:15; Suisse, 2012:32).

Diverse leaders in gender also serve as role models, shaping the aspirations of younger generations. Diversity is linked to increased performance. Studies suggest that organisations with higher percentages of women in their top management teams perform better financially (McKinsey & Company, 2013:2). Diverse teams are more likely to “think outside the box” and come up with innovative solutions to challenges (Certo, Lester, Dalton & Dalton, 2006:n.p.). A critical mass of women broadens the perspective of boards of directors to better represent the concerns of diverse stakeholders; women are more

likely than men to pursue answers to difficult questions; and finally, women tend to bring a more collaborative approach to leadership, thereby improving communication between the board and senior executives (Konrad & Kramer, 2006). The inclusion of women on boards can also enhance the public reputations of the organisations they serve (Miller & Trianna, 2009:776). Diverse voices are also likely to be more strategically innovative, while senior executive groups which are diverse could produce superior outcomes (Catalyst, 2013:15; Tinuke, 2011:389).

In today's rapidly changing and competitive world, maintaining the same level of performance is not an option. As the bar continues to rise, performance needs to keep improving or today's acceptable performance can become tomorrow's poor performance (Catalyst, 2013:14). So, diversity in leadership is an essential element of today's organisational leadership (Chliwniak, 1997:30; Tinuke, 2011:389). In this regard, the empowerment of women is located within the discourse and agenda of gender equality and is increasingly being considered in the agendas of international development organisations, perhaps more as a means to achieve gender equality than as an end in itself (Chliwiniak, 1997:30).

As opposed to men, women are recognised as being more pragmatic, organised, persevering, humane, adept at working in teams, negotiating and dialogue, and more persistent which is fundamental to working in teams (Doherti & Manfredi, 2010:44). Women are more pragmatic in that they give more attention to personal and human aspects and they are more attentive than men in day-to-day situations that one needs to have the capacity to listen, and work with others. In this regard, O'Toole (2012:219) supported the idea of diversity as "it is becoming more difficult for any single individual and man to possess all of the abilities and skills required to competently and effectively lead today's organisations".

Apart from this, women possess a number of essential qualities of leadership. They are highly efficient in resource utilisation and management, trusted, patient, democratic, and transformational in their leadership (World Bank, 2014:107). There are also benefits for economic growth and family welfare that come from educating women (World Bank, 2014:107). This can be done more when women are empowered at all levels of the



education system in general and HEIs in particular (Catalyst, 2013:15). For Catalyst, this is because on the one hand, this contributes to national development, and on the other hand, it helps to promote the advancement of women and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (ibid).

Another importance of gender diversity in the top leadership of HEIs is their “learning focused leadership”. In this regard, Murphy and Beck (2005:278) pointed out that instruction is central to women. Women administrators are likely to introduce and support strong programmes in staff development, to encourage innovation, and to experiment with instructional approaches. Women are likely to stress the importance of instructional competence in teachers and to be attentive to task completion within instructional programmes. In this regard, women are regarded as advantaged by their instructional and interpersonal strengths (Grogan & Brunner, 2005:29). By putting instruction and learning at the centre of their leadership mission, women are likely to push for instructional change that improves learning. According to the aforementioned authors, this is because women spend much of their time in the classroom before coming into leadership positions at any level of the system (cf. 3.7.4).

Women educational leaders often make decisions based on the priorities of student learning. According to Regan and Brooks (2011:1), women like to see schools managed well, and they are inspired to see students grow and develop. This experience of women may be attributed to their smooth approach towards people and their nature (Regan & Brooks, 2011:1). Furthermore, women leaders can play a role in curbing the problems that female students face inside and outside the institutions including HEIs (FAWE, 2015:8). Another benefit of empowering women in HEIs to take up higher positions is that they often react creatively or use collaborative strategies that are imperative for leading in higher education where there are thousands of both male and female students (Hirut et al., 2004:8). They do not react to aggression aggressively, and they seldom respond to attacks negatively. Instead, they (women) use more problem-solving approaches. They are more inclined to finding the root causes of the behaviour while men tend to deal with the behaviour itself.

According to UNESCO (2010:4), the presence of women as staff in general and leaders in particular is likely to serve as a base for role models for minimising the hostility of educational institutions to women. Therefore, the presence of women instructors and leaders in senior leadership positions in the HEIs seems to be help with solving problems that female students may face inside and outside of institutions including HEIs and even political developments in many countries (particularly the developing countries) that are not well endowed with natural resources and the skills to exploit those existing natural resources properly.

UNESCO (2010:4) further stated, “If higher performance in the formal system of education like HEIs is required, it needs strong leadership by all the domains of the society – both women and men”. However, a close look at the past and current leadership of Ethiopian HEIs and staff profile reveals that the system is still male-dominated, with few women typically at the lower ranks which could be unfavourable for the country’s development initiatives (Genet, 2014:33). Thus, the growing complexity of leading HEIs involves dealing with both male and female students, male and female academic and administrative staff, the untapped leadership potential of women, and the under-representativeness of women in different leadership positions in public HEIs of south Ethiopia. Moreover, the visibility of women in senior positions acts as a catalyst that motivates younger women to play a more influential role in institutions of higher learning and serves as a redress and affirmative-action mechanism for gender inequalities. Though the number of women obtaining degrees in African universities has increased, very few are retained within HEIs, and even fewer of them progress to senior positions of decision-making (Mama, 2011:23).

Another advantage of gender diversity in senior leadership positions of HEIs is that women have natural leadership talents, personality traits, thinking and feeling styles, values, motivations, experiences since their childhood, and cultural milieu. For thousands of years, men and women did different jobs, and tasks that required different skills. As natural selection weeded out less able workers, time carved differences in the male and female brain. Countless cultural forces influence how men and women think and act. Yet,

in general, each gender has its own range of abilities; each is a living archive of its distinctive past (Mama, 2011:23).

There are some talents that women express more readily than men; for instance, an aptitude that is in part, from the women's brain architecture and hormones, and skills that leadership theorists now espouse as essential to leadership effectiveness. Although these talents are not exclusive to women, women display them more regularly than men (Fisher, 1999:n.p.; Fuge, 2005:10).

Another remarkable difference is also in the way men and women think. Psychologists report that when women cogitate, they gather details somewhat more differently than men, they integrate more details faster and arrange these bits of data into more complex patterns (Fuge, 2005:10; Hirut et al., 2004:8). As they make decisions, women tend to weigh more variables, consider more options, and see a wider array of possible solutions to a problem. Women tend to generalise, synthesise and take a broader, more holistic, and more contextual perspective of any issue. They tend to think in webs of factors – called web-thinking; not straight lines. In contrast, men are more likely to focus their attention on one thing at a time, what is termed step-thinking (Fisher, 1999:n.p.).

Men tend to compartmentalise relevant materials, discard what they regard as extraneous data, and analyse information in a more causal path. This is because the female brain has more nerve cables connecting the two brain hemispheres; the male brain is more compartmentalised, so sections operate more independently (Shakeshaft, 2009:103). Moreover, testosterone tends to focus one's attention. Women's lower levels of this hormone may contribute to their broader, more contextual view. Additionally, some of the genes that construct these regions vary between the sexes. Although both the web-thinking and step-thinking are still valuable in the contemporary world where depth of vision, breadth of vision, and systems thinking is required, web-thinking is more valuable. Furthermore, because of the web-thinking approach, women are more able to tolerate ambiguity – a trait that likely stems from their ability to hold several things simultaneously in mind. This web-thinking also enables them to exercise more intuition (Fuge, 2005:10).

Women are also better at long-term planning because of web-thinking which enables them to assess multiple, complex scenarios and plot a long-term course. They are apt to think long-term more regularly, whereas men are more likely to focus on the here and now (Fuge, 2005:10; Perschel, 2009:133). Again, the brain architecture of women endows them with another natural talent that is mental flexibility which is an essential trait of leadership in our dynamic world. For instance, they are considered better at generating new ideas than their male counterparts (according to a US study on women as managers, leaders, and teammates) and in imagination (Fisher, 1999:n.p.; Fuge, 2005:10).

Women are also endowed with the skills of verbal articulation to lead. In this regard, it is said that words are women's tools. An exceptional female talent is the ability to find the right word rapidly or basic articulation (Page, 2007:471; Twain, 2016:35). Such a skill emerges in early childhood. Infant girls babble more than infant boys. They speak sooner with longer utterances and more complex grammatical constructions. In this regard, women are said to be born to talk – a feminine acuity that probably evolved to enable ancestral women to comfort, cajole, and educate their little ones, chastise, even ostracise group members who failed to meet their responsibility, reward those who did and maintain harmony in the community (Fuge, 2005:10; Shakeshaft, 2009:14).

Women have also executive social skills. They have evolved a keener ability to pick up the nuances of posture and gesture, read complex emotions in faces, and hear slight changes in tone of voice according to the above sources. Women on average have a better sense of taste, smell, touch, and hearing. They see better in the dark, have better peripheral vision and remember more objects in the room or landscape. Women are well built to read minds. Such skills are associated with female hormones or oestrogen (Fuge, 2005:10). Women have better social skills regarding networking. They have remarkable faculties for networking, collaboration, empathy, inclusion and sharing power. They form cliques and consider power as an egalitarian network of supportive connections. Men, however, tend to cast themselves within hierarchies and view power as a rank and status (Fuge, 2005:10; Hirut et al., 2004:8).

Mental flexibility, web-thinking, their ability to embrace ambiguity, intuition, imagination, a penchant for long-term planning, verbal acuity, executive social skills, empathy, and

capacity to collaboration, are all essential leadership traits in the new globalisation era which women possess more than men (Bush, 2007:391). However, it is not the intention of the researcher to make women replace men in leadership. Many men display these traits to a considerable degree. Moreover, men have a host of other skills that make them natural leaders as well. For instance, men are on average, superior at all sorts of special and engineering skills, which are attributes or gifts associated with testosterone (Fuge, 2005:10; Hirut et al., 2004:10). Using these capabilities men have long been building our “high-tech” society, vastly improving human health and welfare (Fuge, 2005:1; McNae & Vali, 2015:291). So, women and men are like the two feet that need each other to get ahead. Nevertheless, the world is changing in ways that can profit from both women and men.

Another importance of women leaders is that they are cooperative and have a gift for ‘reading’ people, patience, networking abilities, negotiating skills, a drive to nurture children, have an interest in ethnic diversity and education, a keen imagination, a win-win attitude, mental flexibility, and ability to embrace ambiguity.

Women leaders are likely to be transformational leaders; hence, they serve as role models, who mentor and empower workers and encourage innovation even when the organisation they lead is generally successful (McNae & Vali, 2015:291). They possess greater ability to motivate and inspire followers in order to achieve optimal common goals. Women are effective not only as transformational leaders, but also as transactional leaders because they reward employees for their good performance more than men, according to different studies done in the United States (Fuge, 2005:10; Perschel, 2009:133). People have long been interested in leadership throughout human history, but it has only been recently that a number of formal leadership theories have emerged. Interest in leadership increased during the early part of the twentieth century. Early leadership theories focused on the qualities that distinguished between leaders and followers, while subsequent theories looked at other variables such as situational factors and skill levels (Hoyt, 2010:485).

Women are also required in the leadership of higher education because they possess many qualities like their male counterparts (Griffin, 2012:425). For example, women’s

competences and skills, their lived experiences since they were born, the human and democratic rights aspects, their population size, which is half of the general population, the gender diversity significance in leadership, the mental structure and tenacity show the need for women in leadership positions of HEIs (FDRE, 2009: 56).

Furthermore, organisations with a higher percentage of women in their leadership have been found to perform better in many aspects like financial, human, and material resources management (McNae & Vali, 2015:291). However, in Ethiopia, the upper leadership positions of HEIs remain largely a male domain. In order to bridge such a gap, gender diversity matters in senior leadership positions, and leveraging female talent to competitive advantage should be addressed accordingly. It is argued that gender diversity improves organisational results and boosts the national economic competitiveness. In this respect, Catalyst (2013:15) reported that, on average, 500 companies with more women on their boards turned in better financial performances than those with fewer female directors.

Similarly, McKinsey and Company (2007:30) noted that companies with three or more women in senior management functions performed better than companies with no women at the top. Accordingly, the organisations with gender diversity performed better in their sector in terms of returns on equality, operating results and stock price growth. Divergent views promote creativity and innovation as well as encouraging greater diligence in decision-making and risk management (Catalyst, 2013:15; McNae & Vali, 2015:291). Research in management indicates that diverse groups outperform homogenous groups in the work environment. Diversity needs to be considered in the same way that you would think of any other strategic variable. It is not only about morality or fairness or doing the right thing, but also about honing a competitive weapon. Diversity is a strategy (Page, 2007:220), and as such, to make the team perform well, diversity of gender matters.

According to executive recruitment firms, unlike men, women are less likely to express interest in leadership or executive roles unless they can see their ability to demonstrate every aspect of the job (Catalyst, 2013:11; McNae & Vali, 2015:297). As skills shortages become more pronounced, these 'passive' women candidates will become increasingly important in the sourcing process, and therefore, women cannot be excluded from the

talent pool at a leadership or any other level. This is because it is too risky to rely on a narrow talent base (Catalyst, 2013:15; McKinsey & Company, 2007:30). HEIs are ideally the places where a lot of materials or inputs are purchased and needed. If the management fails to do so, the goal of the organisation may fail. Therefore, it requires better qualified and talented individuals with purchasing experiences and talents. According to Catalyst (2013:10) and Page (2007:398), women influence or make 80% of household purchasing decisions.

According to Bourque, Scott and Conway (1987:34), it has now become common and mandatory in some countries for organisations to disclose their gender diversity. Organisations have an opportunity to tap into this important buying group. Currently, many organisations that have already recognised women's buying power in their branding, relationship management, products and services see the value of involving them in the operations of their organisations and the implementation of their plans. On the other hand, in today's rapidly changing and competitive world, maintaining the same level of performance is not an option. As the bar continues to rise, performance needs to keep improving or today's acceptable performance can become tomorrow's poor performance (Catalyst, 2013:14). So, gender diversity in leadership is an essential element of today's organisational leadership effectiveness (Chliwiniak, 1997:30).

If higher performance in the formal system of education like higher education is required, it needs strong leadership by all the domains of the society – both women and men (McKinsey & Company, 2007:31).

Furthermore, leadership is an art that can be developed through the mastery of key leadership areas of success which can be learnt and improved through self-reflection (Tsegay, 2013:75). Self-reflection or introspection is self-examination or reflective examination of one's beliefs and motives in order to know oneself. Women are more reflective, and they learn better and practise more about leadership through process than their male counterparts, and they are believed to be better than men at auto-evaluation (ibid).

Empowering more women in senior leadership positions paves the way for more potential women leaders and impacts the growth and development of women in line positions (Catalyst, 2007:10). In the next section, the most relevant women supportive styles and approaches of leadership are presented.

### **3.7 WOMEN SUPPORTIVE STYLES AND APPROACHES OF LEADERSHIP**

Although there are several types and theories of leadership, this section focuses on five styles, namely, transformational, spiritual, participative, instructional and relational, because they are more relevant to women leadership in educational settings in general and HEIs in particular (Hoyt, 2010:485; Yukl & Masuhd 2010:81).

#### **3.7.1 Transformational Leadership**

Women are more likely to use a transformational leadership style which is associated with organisational effectiveness (Eagly, 2007:12). Transformational leadership today has become a focus of concepts relating to organisational leadership. These concepts are based on vision statements that provide the directional path for the organisation. Transformational leadership is the style used most frequently by women. The characteristics of transformational leadership relate to female values developed through socialisation processes that include building relationships, communication, consensus building, power as influence, and working together for a common purpose (Burns, 1978:20).

These authors argue further that the effectiveness of leadership, among other things, is characterised by the ability to motivate people, build relationships and influence outcomes. The behaviour that is modelled by the leader and the top management profoundly shape and thereby determine competency level of their juniors. A transformational leader has a major impact on the quality and efficiency level of subordinates (Kouzes & Posner, 2010:459). It is characterised as inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, and charisma (Kouzes & Posner, 2010:459). These theories focus on the connections formed between leaders and followers. Furthermore, transformational leaders motivate and inspire people by helping the group members see the importance and higher good of the task.



These leaders focus on the performance of group members, but also want each person to achieve their potential. Such leaders often have high ethical and moral standards (Hilaire, 2008:39; Lumby & Coleman, 2007:13). This theory advances the idea that an effective leader is discernible by his or her actions (Hilaire, 2008:39). After an analysis of the list of behaviours at Ohio and Michigan state universities, scholars presented two categories – consideration and initiation of structure. Consideration underscores that is leaders are concerned about their subordinates as people, are trusted by their subordinates, are interested in their progression, and promote camaraderie (friendship). On the other hand, initiating structure refers to a style in which the leader defines closely and clearly what subordinates are supposed to do and how, and actively schedules work for them (Avolio & Bass, 2005:315; Hilaire, 2008:39). Transformational leadership underlines that a woman leader should be warm and communal (Eagly & Carli, 2007:63).

Another influential model whose classification of leadership behaviour is similar to that of the Ohio state studies is the Blake and Mouton's (1964) managerial grid, now called the leadership grid (Langton & Robbins, 2009:137), which proposes two styles of behaviour: consideration behaviour and initiating structure presented by the Ohio state studies, i.e., behaviour oriented toward individuals (concern for people) and behaviour oriented toward task (concern for production). These two styles underpin the behaviour oriented toward individual and behaviour oriented toward task respectively. Around the 1980s, the concept of leadership changed direction with what is referred to as the new leadership. Instead of considering leadership as an influence process, the new leadership views leaders as “managers of meaning” (Hilaire, 2008:39). This includes transactional leadership, transformational leadership, charismatic leadership and visionary leadership.

The term transformational leadership first appeared in the early 1970s in J.V. Downton's book '*Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in the Revolutionary Process*,' and this concept was further elaborated and developed by James Mac Gregor Burns in his book '*Leadership*' (Burns, 1978:20). In 1985, Bernard and Bass presented transformational leadership theory, including the models and factors of behaviour. This was quickly followed by Tichy and Devanna's '*The Transformational Leader*' (1984 cited in Kotter, 2007:96). It has been globalised as a means by which heads of organisations

can respond to the demands for reform to achieve appropriate and effective outcomes through turning the organisation into higher reliability environment (Leithwood & Jantiz, 2008:496).

Transformational leadership is a leadership style where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to a higher level of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978:20; Dereje, 2009:60). Transformational leaders offer a purpose that transcends short-term goals and focuses on higher and long-term goals, and their relationship with followers is based on mutual understanding and common goals. They recognise the associates' needs and attempt to develop those needs to higher levels of maturity. This leadership touches followers' deeper values and a sense of higher purpose and leads to higher levels of the followers' commitment and effort and more enduring changes (Fernandez, 2014:38). It provides a compelling vision of a better future and inspires trust through seemingly unshakeable self-confidence and conviction (Conger, 1989:637).

Current research on leadership emphasises the importance of inspiring passion in others (O'Toole, 2012:219). Some of the characteristics that leaders can embody to stimulate this passion are: a positive vision, inspiring core values, emotional intelligence, courage, and an engaging and inclusive leadership style (Bilimoria & Godwin, 2006:47). This approach to transmitting effective leadership is seen more typically in women (Kouzes & Posner, 2010:459). A transformational leader also recognises and exploits an existing need or demand of potential followers and looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs and engages the followers fully (Burns, 1978:20). They elevate the desire of followers for achievement and self-development and promote the development of groups and organisations. Instead of responding to the immediate self-interest of the followers, with either a stick or a carrot, transformational leaders arouse in individual a heightened awareness to key issues, as well as to the group and organisation, while increasing the confidence of followers, gradually moving them from concerns for existence to concerns for achievement, growth and development (O'Toole, 2012:219). Transformational leadership involves fundamental social changes and regards the moral values of the individuals. Tichy and Devanna in Kotter (2007:96) identify seven

characteristics of transformational leaders: (1) qualities of the agents of change; (2) courage; (3) openness and faith in one's followers; (4) led by values; (5) lifelong learning; (6) ability to face complex, ambiguous, and uncertain situations; and (7) visionary abilities.

Fernandez (2014:55) has established four primary behaviours known as the 4I's that constitute transformational leadership. These are: idealised or charismatic influence; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individual considerations (Hoy & Miskel, 2008:12; Kouzes & Posner, 2010:459).

Transformational leaders build relationships with followers through interactive communication, which forms a cultural bond between the two participants and leads to a shifting of values by both parties toward the common ground. They inspire followers to see the attractive future possibilities and communicate expectations and demonstrate a commitment to goals and shared vision. According to Fernandez (2014:65), an intellectually stimulating leader arouses in others a greater cognisance of problems, awareness of their own thoughts and imagination, and recognition of their beliefs and values. Again, transformational leaders recognise and satisfy their immediate associates' current needs and expand and elevate them so that they reach their full potential. They make their companions feel empowered enough to organise their own initiatives. They effect change in others using a variety of methods including defining or redefining the cultures of the organisation as well as working together closely with associates.

Bush (2007:391) links three leadership models to his collegial management model, out of which the first is transformational leadership. This form of leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organisational members. Higher levels of personal commitment to organisational goals and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity (Kouzes & Posner, 2010:459; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008:496). According to Bush (2007:391), transformational leadership is conceptualised along eight dimensions: building organisational vision; establishing organisational goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualised support; modelling best practices and important organisational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a

productive organisational culture; and developing structures to foster participation in organisational decisions.

Transformational leaders succeed in gaining the commitment of others to such a degree that higher levels of accomplishment become virtually a moral imperative (Hilaire, 2008:40). In this regard, women are highly qualified for listening to others which is one of the characteristics of transformational leaders (Dereje, 2009:60). In this way, this theory is also likely to be applicable to women.

Transformational leadership is a strategy that generates reform in the stakeholders, school culture, and educational organisations (Burton & Peachey, 2009:245). It improves the teachers' performance and students' achievement (Chegini, 2010:127). According to Abu-Tineh et al. (2009:265), transformational leaders achieve extraordinary results by developing a shared vision, setting the example, challenging the status quo, and supporting the staff. Transformational leadership is considered a moral endeavour that raises the morale and motivation of the leader and followers to a higher level (Pepper, 2010:5). Transformational leadership practices allow leaders to achieve the goals set by the organisation and obtain exceptional results (Kouzes & Posner, 2010:459).

### **3.7.2 Spiritual Leadership**

The idea of leadership grounded in spirituality is a strong theme found in research on women leadership (Perschel, 2009:133). Bailey et al. (2008, cited in Perschel, 2009:133) captured this idea in their interview in their study as follows: "Pulling women together to discuss spirituality, sustenance, and breath has been a dream from way back...pulling together women who are dealing with the same issues and who have developed strategies that are not written about in textbooks". One can deduce from this quotation that spirituality is a source of personal strength as well as a way to understand connectedness to others and to a greater world (Perschel, 2009:133).

### **3.7.3 Participative/Democratic Leadership**

Women are known for their interactive type of leadership that involves: encouraging; participation; delegation of authority and sharing power and information; enhancing self-

worth; changing self-interests for an overall good; relating power to interpersonal skill; and believing in better performance when feeling good (Tsegay, 2013:75). Women leaders also value having influence more than having power according to Trinidad and Normore (2005:11). Democratic leadership theories suggest that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account. These leaders encourage the participation and contribution of group members and help group members feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process (Bush, 2007:391). This leadership model assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group (Bush, 2007:391; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008:496). This model is underpinned by three assumptions – participation increases organisational effectiveness; participation is justified by democratic principles; and in the context of site-based management, leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder (Leithwood & Jantzi 2008:496). Sergiovanni (2000) added:

Participative leadership bonds staff together and in easing the pressures on institutional leaders – the burdens of the leadership will be less if leadership functions and roles are shared and if the concept of leadership density were to emerge as a viable replacement for principal leadership.

This theory, therefore, is suitable for women leadership since it is known to prefer a democratic leadership style.

### **3.7.4 Instructional Leadership**

This type of leadership focuses on the direction of influence rather than its nature and source. This refers to the increasing emphasis on managing teaching and learning as the core activities of educational institutions. According to Bush (2014:3) and Southworth (2002:73), instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, including the professional learning of teachers as well as student growth. In this regard, women embrace relationships, sharing and process. Women educational administrators focus on instructional leadership in supervisory practice and are concerned with students' individual differences, knowledge of curriculum teaching, methods, and the objectives of teaching (Conner, 1992:337).

In the area of instructional leadership, women spend more years as principals and teachers, and have more degrees than men; they emphasise the importance of curriculum and instruction in their work (Tallerico & Blount, 2004:633), while men emphasise more the organisational matters (Conner, 1992:337). Women interact more with teachers, students, parents, colleagues and community, and they support contributive, consensual decision-making, and emphasise the process. They influence teachers to use more appropriate teaching methods, emphasise the importance of curriculum and instruction more (Eakle, 1995:16; Ryder, 1994:28).

Women lean toward facilitative leadership, enabling others to make their contributions through delegations, encouragement, and nudging from behind (Porat, 1991:412). This is because, women's main focus is on relationships, and they interact more frequently than men with teachers, students, parents, non-parent community members, and professional colleagues (Conner, 1992:337). They also spend more time in unscheduled meetings, visible on school campus, and observing teachers considerably more than male principals (Ryder, 1994:28). Moreover, women principals are more likely to interact with their staff and spend more time in the classroom or with teachers discussing the academic and curricular areas of the instruction, and they are more likely to influence teachers or instructors to use more desirable teaching methods (Bush, 2014:5). In the same way, instructional leadership is thought to be supportive to women leadership in HEIs.

### **3.7.5 Relational Leadership**

Relational leadership suggests that leadership is about being in relationship with others in a horizontal rather than a hierarchical sense (Billene, 2018:9). Women often talk about accomplishing goals with and through others when asked about their leadership style (Perschel, 2009:133). According to Smit (2014:117), relational leadership is a theory developed by Regan and Brooks in 1995. They developed this theory based on the resistance to the already existing socialisation of women into the prevailing male-dominant culture. An emerging trend in female leadership theories is the relational perspective and approach (Cathcart, 2014:44; Uhl-Bien, 2006:654). It argues that women value relationships with colleagues more than men do. Shakeshaft (2009:130) added that

women rely on their good communication with others, team-work, collaboration and community connection. According to Smit (2014:117), women resisted the previously male traditional administrative behaviour that is modelled by the controlling behaviour of their male counterparts. Leadership as a relational influence can be performed by anyone; it is not a person or a place or a thing, instead, it is “is the action of influence; it is relation and it doesn’t exist by itself” (Smit, 2014:117). This leadership theory or concept is concerned with the concepts such as care, vision, collaboration, courage and intuition, which are seen to be feminist attributes of leadership. While these concepts are not new in literature, they are given new conceptualisations for the practice of relational leadership (Genet, 2014:33; Smit, 2014:117).

The attributes of relational leadership differ greatly from the traditional administrative language of control, hierarchy, authority and division of labour. While traditional and relational languages are at opposite ends of the spectrum, it does not mean that relational language is confined only to female leaders. Instead, it is meant for all genders (Meaza, 2009:10; Smit, 2014:117). Accordingly, what is enlightening here is that the increased presence of women leaders, as well as the emerging feminist scholarship in this field, is a corollary to the widening acceptance of the idea of leadership as relational (ibid). Out of the many definitions of relational leadership, this study adopts the one proposed by Uhl-Bien (2006:654). According to Uhl-Bien (2006:654), relational leadership is a “social influence process through which emergent coordination (that is evolving social order) and change (for example, new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours and ideologies) are constructed and produced”.

This definition locates leadership in a jointly constructed but disembodied process, not in individuals. Uhl-Bien (2006:654) proposes this relational leadership theory as an approach that can encompass both individuated and connected perspectives. Relations produce power in a flattened organisational structure. Leaders who develop coherence around shared values are likely to deepen the sense of community with an organisation – a sense of being in relationship with others who are striving for the same goal (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011:131; Smit, 2014:117). Achieving goals usually takes place with and through others; power is conceptualised differently emphasising that the power of

everyone should be expanded. Given the dominance of men, women often would express their discomfort with power and deny their own power. What has changed is the language in use of power – power with rather than power over (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011:131).

### **3.8 STRATEGIES USED FOR IMPROVING WOMEN UNDERREPRESENTATION IN SENIOR POSITIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN AFRICA**

Various conventions and strategies have been formulated to increase the participation of women in education, decision-making, and development activities at a global level. Over the years, a number of global, regional and national general frameworks and policies with their respective strategies have been designed to respond to global calls for gender equality. First, the Universal Human Rights Declaration of 1948 was made, followed by different international conventions signed by different countries (World Bank, 2013:107).

In 2000, the World Education Forum adopted the Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All (EFA). In the same year, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for measuring development progress in all countries up to 2015 were adopted. According to UNESCO (2010), intervention strategies included: increasing women's participation in education at all levels so as to raise the number of women from which able managers could evolve; formulating equal opportunity policies, changing the environment in which women work and the attitudes towards educated women, flexibility in working hours, and reviewing of recruitment and promotion policies in higher education. For instance, during the civil rights movement, women were made conscious of the ways in which they had also been treated as second class citizens. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 (in the US) was a turning point to address discrimination against women in the workforce which required men and women to be paid equal pay for equal work. The inclusion of women in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (in the US) prohibited employers from segregating or classifying on the basis of sex in addition to race or ethnicity (Carlson & Dimitriadis, 2003:10). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibited all forms of discrimination against women and blacks in the workplace (Smallen-Grob, 2003:9).

The above pieces of legislation liberated young women who could now be confident in the ability to finish school and begin a career without fear of having to leave school



because of getting pregnant. The 1970s also became known as the sexual revolution, where women openly challenged the myth that “you have to be married to have an enjoyable sex life”. During the women’s liberation movement in the 1960s and 1970s, many women continued to fight for jobs, equal pay and education. One of the most publicised events was the protest against the Miss America Pageant, where several women tossed a few brassieres into a trash can, which was falsely reported as bra-burning (Carlson & Dimitriadis, 2003:29).

The largest demonstration in 1970 was the Women’s Strike for Equality which led to numerous legal victories and a growth in feminist organisations (Smallen-Grob, 2003:9). Congress passed an Equal Credit Opportunity Act, a bill on equalising benefits for married employees, and Title IX which prohibits sex discrimination for educational programmes for women who received Federal aid (Collins, 2007:747). In 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment was finally passed by congress, but failed to receive ratification by its expiration date in 1982 and the law was never adopted. By 1979, the American workforce was comprised of over 40% women based on the above struggles (Collins, 2007:747).

The African countries on their part, adhered to the second target of the MDGs, namely, universal primary education for all (EFA), and the third goal aimed to promote the rights of women and girls to enjoy equal educational opportunities with boys and men. The concept of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women (United Nations, 1995) has been further accepted in Africa. In its “African Agenda 2063”, the African Union Commission (AUC, 2015:17) included as the 6<sup>th</sup> aspiration: “an Africa whose development is people-driven, especially relying on the potential offered by its women and youth”. The essence of this goal is that the AU aspires to empower women by 2063 (Tekle, 2015:17).

Ghana has adopted the policy framework and strategies to empower and emancipate women through their policy entitled ‘*Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women’s empowerment into Ghana’s development*’. The challenges facing Ghana to achieve gender equality, social protection, and women’s empowerment are diverse. In order to address these problems, successive governments of Ghana have made several efforts to ensure gender equality and women empowerment. Issues pertinent to women

empowerment were thoroughly identified through national consultation (Knights, 2014:70).

Women in Ethiopia occupy a low status in the society. Although they represent half of the population and contribute to the growth and development of the country, they have, however, not shared the fruits of development equally with their male counterparts (Billene, 2018:9). The rights such as access to land, credit and other productive resources are still difficult for women to attain. They also experience multiple forms of other deprivation such as longer working days, women-specific health problems, a low level of education relative to men, and lack of adequate representation in leadership and decision-making positions. Therefore, taking the above realities into account, the Women's Affairs' Office Ethiopia (MoE, 2013:10) under the auspices of the Federal Government of Ethiopia attempted to take a number of measures though women are still underrepresented in different leadership and management positions (FAWE, 2015:7; MoE, 2013:18).

Accordingly, Ethiopia committed itself to building the capacity of women through education and training so that they can hold decision-making positions. This was identified as one of the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform. Nationally, the FDRE promulgated a Constitution in 1995 that offers the provision of affirmative action. Article 35 (3) of the Constitution states that "the historical legacy of inequalities and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia..." was taken into account. Moreover, the Ethiopian government issued the National Policy on Ethiopian Women in 1993 to ensure gender equality on the basis of the constitution. This was guided by the objective to eliminate prejudices step-by-step as well as customary and other practices that are based on the ideas of male supremacy and enable women to hold public office and to participate in all decision-making levels in the country (MoE, 2013:19). Along with other programmes, Ethiopia launched and attempted to implement gender mainstreaming programmes although the results were not as required at different levels and sectors (Genet, 2014: 33).

Furthermore, the New Education and Training Policy issued in 1994 is instrumental as it states "special attention will be given to women and those students who did not get

educational access” (MoE, 2013:15). Again, it is clearly stipulated in the Federal Higher Education Proclamation no. 351/2009, Article 27/4, that it is the right for the women of an academic staff of the university to be assigned to various positions of responsibility and that they are entitled to get further education and training in accordance with the law.

### **3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The literature relevant to the study was reviewed exhaustively. The introduction provided the highlights of the key aspects covered in the chapter. Secondly, issues related to the concept of leadership and women in general and educational leadership and women in particular were discussed. Thirdly, women leadership status in HEIs in four sub-Saharan African countries – Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, and Uganda were addressed. When the similarities and differences in practices and challenges of these four African countries are compared and contrasted, similarities overweigh the differences. In all cases, discrimination and exclusion of women from participation in major decision-making processes has been common. In all the four African countries, a new movement of women to emancipate themselves and government attempts have been observed. Though not put on the ground as required, governments have attempted to formulate policies on empowering women. However, the degrees of attempts to empower women and challenges of all these African countries were learnt differently. Furthermore, women and men leadership qualities, and the significance of women leadership in higher education and the benefits of diversity were explored. Thereafter, five supportive theories of women leadership in HEIs and finally, the strategies and practices used to tackle the problems of women underrepresentation in leadership positions were dealt with. The next chapter presents the research methodology and design.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapters 2 and 3, the literature review on leadership and management highlighted some practices and challenges confronting women in general, and in top positions in HEIs in particular. The concepts of leadership, leadership qualities of men and women, women leadership supportive theories, women leadership status in HEIs in some sub-Saharan African countries, notably, Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana, and South Africa were highlighted. Women leadership, significance of diversity and the strategies used by different HEIs and authorities to bring up women to the leadership positions were discussed extensively. Feminist theory was used as a framework for this study, along with its branches, namely, African feminism, black feminism, liberal feminism, and radical feminism as well as Fagenson's model that explores ways of empowering women were discussed (cf. Section 2.2.1).

This chapter explains the philosophical assumptions and a paradigm to guide this study, its elements and related concepts. The paradigm chosen is an interpretivist or constructivist paradigm. In educational research, the term paradigm is used to describe a researcher's worldview and outlook. It is a conceptual lens through which the researcher looks at the world (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006:11). First, the philosophical concepts of epistemology, ontology, and axiology are discussed, followed by a discussion of research methodology, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques. Data analysis and interpretation as well as the research questions are presented step-by-step followed by a discussion of concepts such as ethical considerations and trustworthiness, which involves credibility, transferability, confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent, and confirmability.

## **4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGMS AND PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

### **4.2.1 Philosophical Assumptions**

#### **4.2.1.1 Ontology**

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and what actually exists; for example, how we think the social world is constituted is our ontology. That is a branch of philosophy concerned with the assumptions we make in order to believe that something makes sense or is real, or the very nature or essence of the social phenomenon we are investigating (Kivunja, 2017:26; Scotland, 2012:9). This study, therefore, employed an interpretivist paradigm to understand and describe the perceptions of the vice-presidents and deans and directors of public universities in south Ethiopia. Multiple, socially constructed realities were found ontologically. All the groups put forward their own different views without the interruption of the researcher, and subjective knowledge and context dependent truth were obtained here.

#### **4.2.1.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that seeks to analyse the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired and validated. It is the philosophy that underpins the researcher's approach to get information (Kivunja, 2017:26; Scotland, 2012:9). It is based on the belief that knowledge is acquired from others. If someone relies on the data gathered from knowledge, books, and leaders in the organisation, then his or her epistemology is grounded on authoritative knowledge (ibid). In this regard, the data for this study were collected from leaders of HEIs. Epistemology is important because it helps the researcher to establish the faith he or she puts in his or her data, and it affects how he or she goes about uncovering knowledge in the social context that he or she investigates.

#### **4.2.1.3 Axiology**

Axiology refers to the ethical issues that need to be considered when planning a research proposal (Scotland, 2012:9). It is a philosophical approach that enables a researcher to make decisions of value or the right decision. In this regard, all regulations and ethical considerations laid down by the REC of UNISA, along with other ethical aspects of human

research were considered. These included anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, accuracy and accessibility.

#### **4.2.2 Research Paradigms**

The paradigm employed for this study was the interpretivist view. Essentially, this paradigm seeks to understand the subjective world of human experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:79). It makes an effort to get into the head of the subjects being studied, so to speak, and to understand and interpret what the subject is thinking or the meaning he or she is making of the context (ibid.).

This qualitative study followed the interpretivist paradigm to explore the relationship between women underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs and the perceptions of the vice-presidents and deans and/or directors of colleges of public universities in south Ethiopia. According to Mertens (2009:11), the assumption guiding this paradigm, is that knowledge is socially constructed by people who take part in the research process and by the researcher. Therefore, it is proposed that the researcher should attempt to understand the existing experiences from the perspectives of those who live it. The way women empowerment is executed should be in the context of the participants' subjective and multiple perceptions. Accordingly, the vice-presidents and deans of public universities of south Ethiopia were interviewed. In the same vein, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with the deans of colleges of the four public universities.

This study employed a case study design and qualitative data were collected through unstructured interviews, FGDs and participant observation.

#### **4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative methodology was used to examine the phenomenon under study, because according to Berg and Lune (2012:367), this technique allows researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives.

Qualitative data for this study was obtained from the vice-presidents and deans of public universities of South Ethiopia (all of them were men because of the absence of women in such positions) through face-to-face and focus group interviews respectively.

#### **4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design refers to the plan and schedule of work, or a process of creating an empirical test to support or reject a knowledge claim (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018:464). Nconco (2006:43) also defined it as it is a blueprint or detailed plan for how a research study is to be conducted – operationalising variables so that they can be measured, selecting a sample of interest to study, and collecting data to be used as a basis for analysing results. This study includes a statement of the purpose of the research, initial research questions, review of the related literature, and rationale for the selection of the case (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:381).

A research design aids the researcher in the allocation of his/her scarce resources by posing crucial choices. It is the plan that includes data collection tools like interviews, FGDs, observation, and analysis of records and situations. This chosen research design, therefore, is hoped to provide empirical evidence to answer the basic research questions already designed. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:156) also define it as a plan for selecting participants, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question (s). They further indicate that the goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible. For Durrheim (2004:23) also, a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research strategy. Accordingly, taking all the above aspects into consideration, the researcher attempted to use case study research design based on the importance of obtaining in-depth information from the cases while they were at their sites (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:381; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018:464).

An exploratory multiple case study is written in a narrative form and is concerned primarily with providing the researcher with insight and understanding of the unique case (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:443). According to Stake (2010:43), qualitative case study

research tries to establish an empathetic understanding for the reader through a thick, e.g., an in-depth, detailed description, conveying to the reader how the participants experienced the phenomenon.

#### **4.5 APPROPRIATENESS OF RESEARCH PARADIGMS, METHOD AND DESIGN**

This qualitative research allows the researcher to rely on the participants' responses to collect data in the form of words (texts) to analysis (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012: 381). It also allows the researcher a detailed interpretation of the participants' experiences. An exploratory multiple case study, thus, was thought to be appropriate to carry out an in-depth study and get information from individuals who held the senior leadership positions in the public HEIs on the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions. As to Gay et al. (2012:381), a qualitative case study enables the researcher to go beyond previous comprehension and pushes for a greater level of understanding of a phenomenon. It also enables the researcher to express, deduce, evaluate, explore, and share the knowledge gained regarding the topic under study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:231). Again, according to Irby et al. (2009:9), a qualitative case study focuses on the pattern of meanings that emerge from words, actions and records, and it subscribes to the interpretive paradigm and helps the researcher see the situation through the eyes of the participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018:346).

#### **4.6 POPULATION, SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

##### **4.6.1 Population**

The target populations for this study were the vice-presidents and deans of the public universities of south Ethiopia – Dilla University, Hawassa University, Wachamo University, Arbaminch University, Wolkite University, Mizan Tepi University, and Wolaita Sodo University. The selection was based on their geographic proximities to each other, long-term experience, and similarities in many socio-cultural aspects including the same patriarchal system.



#### **4.6.2 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

It is obvious that data gathering is crucial in research as the data are meant to contribute to a better understanding of a phenomenon. It then becomes imperative that selecting the manner of obtaining data and from whom the data will be acquired be done with sound judgement, especially since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data (Etikan et al., 2016:4). On the other hand, a sample represents the population (ibid.), and sampling for qualitative research is usually done through a purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2014:232; Goulding, 2002).

It is typical in qualitative research to study a few individuals or a few cases. This is because the overall ability of a researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site (Creswell, 2014:232), and in some cases the researcher might study a single individual or site or in other cases the number of participants and sites can be several. In this regard, purposive sampling technique was employed for selecting the four universities out of the existing seven public universities of south Ethiopia, and four vice-presidents and 12 deans (three from each university) for FGDs of three members in four groups in their respective universities. So, here, purposive sampling technique, also called judgement sampling, was the deliberate choice of the researcher due to the experiences the participants had for this study and the purpose and nature of this study.

It is a non-random technique that does not need a set number of participants (Etikan et al., 2016:3). Thus, it is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the participants for the most proper utilisation of available resources. This involves the identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that held top leadership positions. In addition to knowledge and experience, the availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner are essential (Etikan et al., 2016:3; Oppong, 2013:9). The idea behind this technique is to concentrate on people with particular characteristics who will be more able to assist with the relevant research.

With regard to the type of purposive sampling technique, a homogenous sampling method was employed for this study, because this method focuses on participants who share similar traits or specific characteristics (Oppong, 2013:9). This took into consideration that the participants of this study were of similar organisational culture and had similar jobs. Hence, the idea was to focus on this precise similarity and how it related to the topic being researched. On the other hand, the quality of a study mostly depends on the suitability of the sampling strategy employed (Lodico et al., 2006:6).

The decision, regarding which information is needed, depends on the nature of the population. Out of a total of seven public universities of south Ethiopia, four had existed for more than eight years as universities, while three had been in existence for less than five years when this study started in 2013. From these seven universities which opened before 2013, four universities were selected using a purposive sampling method, and the same purposive sampling technique was used to select vice-presidents and deans of these four universities. This was done based on the assumption that participants who held top leadership positions of institutions would provide the researcher with adequate and relevant information.

With regard to the selection of the colleges, Engineering, Natural and Computational Science, Education and Behavioural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, Health and Medicine, Basic Education, and Business and Economics of the four public universities of South Ethiopia were selected. These colleges of the respective public universities were selected because at present the FDRE has given more emphasis to these disciplines hoping that they would contribute to the growth, development and poverty reduction of the country and its people rather than other colleges and disciplines (MoE, 2013:17). On the other hand, empowering women is stipulated in the constitution of the FDRE based on various advantages of women leaders in higher education in general and in hard science areas in particular (MoE, 2013:19). Moreover, these are colleges where top female leaders has been almost non-existent in the history of Ethiopian HEIs (Genet, 2014:33; MoE, 2013:15).

In this regard, in this study, first the four public universities – Dilla, Hawassa, Wachamo, and Wolaita – were selected using the purposive sampling method. The vice-presidents

and deans and/or directors were selected by means of purposive sampling technique based on their rich experience and seniority. Next, access to those four university sites and the participants was gained by physically visiting them.

#### **4.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Qualitative data collection is more than simply deciding on whether one will observe or interview people. There should be at least five steps in the process (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:381; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:315). These are: identifying participants and sites; gaining access; determining types of data to collect; developing data collection forms and administering the data collection process. Then, qualitative data collection tools (for this study) – unstructured face-to-face interview questions, focus group interview questions, and a checklist for participant observation were prepared. With regard to the data collection procedure, 23 face-to-face and unstructured interview questions of a comprehensive nature for four vice-presidents, 23 focus group interview questions for 12 deans (three from each university), and a checklist with 18 questions for participant observation were prepared. They revolved around the five research questions and were sent to the supervisor for critiquing or scrutinising before using them for collecting actual data.

Then, based on the comments from the supervisor and essential amendments, the actual data collection tools were prepared and resent to the supervisor for further comment. Thus, based on the permission from the supervisor, the actual face-to-face and focus group interview questions, and checklists for observation were prepared and sent to the supervisor, REC and SRIHDIC of UNISA via the supervisor along with the completed format of the ethical clearance (Appendix A).

Then, the researcher took a letter of permission and informed consent from the concerned authorities of the four public universities of south Ethiopia based on the permission and request from the supervisor. The researcher also sent permission letter(s) to the supervisor for ethical clearance (Appendix B). Upon receiving the approved ethical clearance from the UNISA, the researcher went to the respective universities, made contact with the relevant samples, and held thorough discussions with the respondents

(Appendix C and D). Accordingly, first individual interviews were made with vice presidents of respective universities at their offices during their work times and they cooperated with the researcher. Upon the completion of individual interviews with four vice presidents, focus group discussions (of four members from each university) with the selected deans and/or directors in free classrooms suggested were made until data was saturated. Subsequently, individual and group interviews were conducted, and afterwards, observations were made thoroughly at different offices and libraries. This was done based on prior consent made with participants.

## **4.8 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

A case study research requires a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a real life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) overtime, through detailed, in-depth data collection (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:381). As to Creswell, it presents an in-depth understanding of the case. Furthermore, in qualitative research, the approach relies on general interviews or observations so that one cannot not restrict the views of participants. The researcher does not use someone else's instruments as in quantitative research and gather closed-ended information (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:381). In order to accomplish this, the researcher used many forms of the qualitative data tools like unstructured interview, FGD, and participant observation.

### **4.8.1 Observations**

Participant observation was used, because it is a first-hand experience with a setting and allows a researcher to open to discovery and inductive, rather than guessing what the context is like, and it provides a chance to learn things that people may be unwilling to discuss in an interview (Bryant, 2003:32). These tools also provide standards for obtaining an insider's perspectives (emic) regarding the issue understudy (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:231). An observation checklist (Appendix G) based on the four research questions for participant observation was prepared. In this regard, the researcher took notes on observation both while observing and immediately after observing the events.

#### **4.8.2 Interviews and Focus Group Discussions**

Once the dates had been arranged for face-to-face interviews and FGDs, the data was collected until saturation level had been reached. The starting time of data collection in the field depended on getting the approved ethical clearance. These all were done based on the principles of research ethics and the consent given.

With regard to the questions, they were prepared in English taking into consideration that the medium of instruction at the HEIs was English and all the participants had good English language proficiency. It was thought that these questions would address all four research questions, that they were all-inclusive and would answer all the research questions. All communication with the participants was done in person. There were three main categories or themes of questions for all interviews and observation. The categories of the questions were as follows:

- Category 1: Causes for women underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in the HEIs of south Ethiopia;
- Category 2: Measures undertaken to tackle women underrepresentation in HEIs of South Ethiopia;
- Category 3: Challenges that HEIs and authorities faced while attempting to tackle the underrepresentation problems of women in senior leadership positions.

#### **4.9 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The qualitative case study focuses on understanding the first persons' lived experiences and perceptions (Creswell, 2014:212). Likewise, the current study focuses on the perceptions of the senior leaders of the public universities of south Ethiopia who held the top leadership positions in their respective universities. Causes for women underrepresentation, measures taken to bring women to upper leadership positions, and challenges that authorities and institutions faced while attempting to tackle the problem of women underrepresentation in the HEIs of south Ethiopia were addressed as the research questions below. This study, therefore, was mainly aimed to answer the following main research question:

“What are the factors that contributed to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in public universities in south Ethiopia?”

Sub-questions are:

- What are the causes of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of HEIs in South Ethiopia?
- What measures do the institutions and government take to tackle the underrepresentation of women in leadership of HEIs in South Ethiopia?
- What challenges do HEIs, the government, women, and the society face while trying to solve the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions?
- How do women deal with their underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs?
- How can the problem of women underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs of south Ethiopia be tackled?

#### **4.10 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION PROCESS**

The goal of data analysis in a qualitative case study is to provide a thick description that accurately captures and communicates the meaning of the data gathered from the participants (Gay et al., 2012:465). Analysis in qualitative approach involves translating the collected qualitative data into a narrative text that addresses the central research questions (Creswell, 2014:232). The study involved three categories and twenty themes. Therefore, data analysis and interpretation process of this study mainly relied on the six-step process of Creswell (2014:223). The collected qualitative data were followed by analysis and interpretation of the collected qualitative data from the individual face-to-face and unstructured interviews, the FGDs, and the participant observation as follows:

1. Firstly, the researcher collected data through jotted down notes from the individual face-to-face interviews, FGDs, and participant observation;
2. Secondly, the researcher read all the collected data to assess the overall meaning; I collected and analysed some of the data simultaneously while collecting it;
3. Thirdly, the researcher arranged the collected data into categories;
4. Fourthly, the researcher used coding to generate themes and sub-themes for analysis;

5. Next, the researcher presented the identified themes and sub-themes using verbatim quotations;
6. Finally, the researcher interpreted the qualitative data.

Qualitative data analysis, which involves searching for themes and categories, is subjective and uses inductive reasoning. Findings are represented in words, narratives and a personal voice (Gay et al., 2012:465; Leedy & Ormrod, 2018:450). Following the interview, though it is a big challenge to analyse qualitative data (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012:465; Patton, 2014:632), through constant reviewing, comparing, grouping, regrouping, clustering, coding, and integrating of the combined, repetitive ideas, the researcher gradually narrows and analyses all the recurring regularities down into major and sub-categories. Besides that, in order to reduce and prevent the likely bias on the part of the researcher and to increase research credibility, summaries of the data and themes are reviewed by professional (s) with expertise in the area. Finally, the data is compared to gain overall perspectives of the respondents regarding the central phenomenon. This was the process the researcher followed for this study (cf. 5.4).

#### **4.11 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER IN DATA COLLECTION**

Qualitative research involves using the researcher as the main data collection instrument (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018:346). The researcher must therefore strive to maximise the trustworthiness of the collected data and minimise personal bias by omitting personal perspectives, eliminating preconceived notions, and remaining open, sensitive, and empathetic to the views of the participants with both interviews and participant observation (Krause, Krause & Bränfors, 2018:991). The ability of the interviewer to reflect on information provided and consciously unmask preconceived ideas and assumptions that may stem from embeddedness in the research context is, therefore, crucial to collecting quality data (Creswell, 2014:232; Gay et al., 2012: 381).

Furthermore, conducting a quality interview also requires interviewers to balance the focus on addressing the purpose of the study and answering research questions with the ongoing adaptation to the interview situation and responses provided by participants (Creswell, 2014:232). Field notes are also used to improve the standard of collected

information. Bernard (2013:56) suggested that using field notes, like observational notes, theoretical notes, methodological notes, and analytical memos while gathering data is essential. Field notes are used to capture non-verbal cues, which contribute to the interpretation and increase the credibility of the findings.

A qualitative approach has the advantage of flexibility, in-depth analysis, and the potential to observe a variety of aspects of a social situation (Creswell, 2014:232; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:320). A researcher, therefore, quickly adjusts the interview schedule for face-to-face interviews if the interviewees' responses suggest the need for additional probes or lines of inquiry in future interviews. By developing and using questions on spot, the researcher can gain a more in-depth understanding of the respondents' beliefs, attitudes or the situation. During the course of an interview or observation, a researcher is able to note changes in bodily expression, voice, mood, intonation, and environmental factors that might influence the interviewees' responses. According to Creswell (2014:235) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010:321), such observational data can be of particular value when participants' body language runs counter to the verbal response given to an interview question. Furthermore, in order to reduce bias in a subjective study, the researcher makes attempts to record the research process, data collection, analysis, and notes when problems exist. In this regard, in this study, the researcher consulted senior colleagues in the process of research design and data analysis. Though the researcher knew some realities about the topic, he attempted to be upfront, frank and honest about his beliefs and values.

#### **4.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

In qualitative studies, reliability and validity are conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigour and quality which are said to be qualifiers that ensure the rigour of the research that is being done (Golafshani, 2003:597), because, without rigour, research becomes worthless and fictional and loses its utility. Therefore, in order to establish trustworthiness, the researcher must conduct verification strategies. The strategies used to ensure this rigour in qualitative studies are: the researcher's responsiveness, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy, an active analytical stance, and saturation (Morse et al., 2002:15).



#### **4.12.1 Responsiveness**

For this study, therefore, through responsiveness, the researcher established trust and credibility. Moreover, the researcher was determined to be open, sensitive, creative, insightful, and willing to relinquish ideas that were not supportive regardless of personal ideas. Apart from this, the researcher minimised any previous assumptions or any ulterior motives regarding the study that could reduce the credibility of the results. The way to achieve trustworthiness and credibility is to eliminate bias and increase the researcher's truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon (Golafshani, 2003:597). Furthermore, adequate orientation was given to the participants to create greater trust and build rapport with the participants. The researcher reassured them of their anonymity by reviewing the informed consent form and by explaining the interview process. Unstructured interviews were used to reduce the likely bias on the part of the researcher (interviewer). The words for interviews were carefully selected to increase clarity.

#### **4.12.2 Credibility**

In order to increase the credibility, different types of participants and data collection tools and sources were used. Furthermore, the participants were given back their transcripts to check for accuracy. This gave an opportunity to the participants to correct anything that was not recorded correctly. According to Creswell (2014:232), it is very helpful to develop trust between the researcher and the participants. In order to avoid bias and eliminate human error with qualitative data, assumptions were noted (Creswell, 2014:232).

#### **4.12.3 Transferability**

Transferability of the findings indicates the degree to which findings are pertinent to other events (Creswell, 2014:235). It can be enhanced by basing data analysis on solid and thick descriptive data of participant experiences (ibid.). In this regard, to enhance the transferability of the findings in this study, in-depth information from participants was taken about their personal experiences about the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in the public universities of south Ethiopia. This was ensured by asking unstructured face-to-face interviews, exhaustive focus group interviews, and through deep observations. To verify that the data collection tools were clear, the

researcher consulted his supervisor and other two senior experts in the area of management and leadership. This was found useful to reduce the likely bias and yield meaningful information according to Creswell (2014:235).

#### **4.13 RESEARCH ETHICS**

A researcher must apply ethics in conducting a study. Ethical considerations are the ethical practices to avoid any wrong or harm done to persons of interests in relation to the study (Gay et al., 2012:401). Accordingly, precaution and care were taken to protect participants from an potential psychological abuse, physical harm, litigation, stress, coercion or deception by maintaining confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and by adhering to a strict records maintenance protocol (Neuman, 2011:99). Research ethics are monitored on a continuous basis throughout the research process to ensure that the ethical parameters and code of ethics are upheld at every stage and phase of the research (ibid.). According to Strydom et al. (2011:11), ethics are very important since they help the researchers to act in a proper and responsible way. They are a set of guiding principles which offer rules and behavioural expectations about how researchers must treat research participants, sponsors, employers, other researchers and assistants. In this regard, the researcher was adhered to the following ethical principles.

##### **4.13.1 Privacy and Confidentiality**

With regard to privacy and confidentiality, participants were not forced to decide to participate in the study and all information is provided voluntarily. They were not forced to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours were revealed (Singleton & Straits, 2010:67). The participants were told clearly that they could withdraw from participating any time if they did not feel comfortable to proceed. All the confidentiality is kept, and physically and mentally fit respondents were involved (Schurink, Fouche & De Vos, 2011:402). Accordingly, in this study, the research ran smoothly with all the participants and consensus was reached between the participants and me, as the researcher.

#### **4.13.2 Informed Consent**

The participants were given sufficient information about the objective of the study, methods of data collection, recording of data collection, keeping of their records, duration of the involvement, the likely advantage of the study. Pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings due to the intensity of the information from the participants to protect their right to privacy and used as a simple way of protecting the participants' identities, and consequently from potential harm. However, for the sake of building trust, my identity and qualification were disclosed to the participants.

#### **4.13.3 Member-Checking**

The major findings were promised to be given for the participants in order to increase their knowledge about the topic of the study. As to Strydom et al. (2011:11), doing this is very important so that they can confirm that the researcher has interpreted the information correctly.

#### **4.14 CONFIRMABILITY**

Confirmability is the process of being neutral to the participants, excluding the thoughts of reshaping the collected data into material reflecting self-interests (Creswell, 2009:167). Data collected from each participant was coded as C1, C2, and C3 based on the numbers of participants.

During the interviews, detailed notes were taken. Data collected from each of the participants was coded. Each participant had the opportunity to review the transcriptions of the interviews to ensure accuracy. Conformity establishes whether the findings are grounded in the data by examining the interview notes. The systems approach was used to avoid any biases that could develop while conducting interviews and observations for the current study (Moustakas, 2005:n.p.).

The study was free of any form of plagiarism, that is all sources used and ideas taken from others directly or indirectly were acknowledged. Adequate and genuine data was used, and ethical clearance was obtained from UNISA's Research Ethics Clearance Certificate by the College of Education Review Committee (CEDU REC).

#### **4.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the paradigm employed for this study, namely, the constructivist/interpretivist view. The central assumption of this paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience, and that it makes an effort to get into the head of the subjects being studied so to speak, and to understand and interpret what the subject is thinking or the meaning they are making of the context (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:79; Scotland, 2012:9). The research design included the data collection tools like interviews, focus group discussion, and observations. This chosen research design, therefore, was aimed at providing empirical evidence to answer the research questions. Accordingly, case study research design was used to obtain the in-depth information from the cases. The case study approach provided the opportunity to draw from multiple sources of information to strengthen the study's findings; and used variety of research methods to analyse data in ways that would arrive at the most comprehensive understanding of the issue.

The appropriateness of the research design and method was also discussed thoroughly in detail. Homogenous purposive sampling method and purposive sampling technique were used for the sampling. With regard to the data collection procedure, the data was collected from the participants based on their informed consent after ethical clearance had been obtained. Furthermore, the role of the researcher while collecting data was discussed exhaustively. Moreover, the quality, relevance, transferability, trustworthiness, and confirmability were discussed. Furthermore, the ethical aspects and procedures to be followed were discussed. The next chapter deals with the presentation and discussions of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study was to explore factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership and/or management positions in the public HEIs of South Ethiopia and propose solutions based on the findings. The objectives of this study were to explore the causes of the underrepresentation of women and to investigate the measures undertaken to tackle the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions regionally, nationally, and institutionally. The study also sought to identify the challenges that HEIs authorities, women, the Federal Government, and society at large faced in their efforts to solve this problem, and to propose some possible strategies to tackle it. In Chapters 2 and 3, both the national context and global perspectives regarding the status of women leadership in senior positions in public HEIs were reviewed while Chapter 4 dealt with the research methodology and design.

This chapter presents the response rates, and the profiles of the participants in both the unstructured, face-to-face, and individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). It also highlights the major qualitative data obtained through the face-to-face interviews, FGD, and the participant observations from the respective vice-presidents, and groups of college deans and/or directors of the four public universities of south Ethiopia – Wolaita Sodo, Wachamo, Dilla, and Hawassa. FGDs with 12 college deans and/or directors (three from each university), and observations at four universities about different actions, approaches and attitudes of university communities towards female academic staffs were conducted. The observations covered the offices, libraries, meeting halls and other gender career promotion supportive issues on the four university campuses. All the participants with each data collection tool were involved and provided relevant data. There were four groups for the focus group interviews, one group from each university composed of college deans and /or directors, and four vice-presidents from the four participating universities. These groups participated in FGD, and the vice-presidents participated in face-to-face unstructured interview.

Each member of focus groups and each vice-president was given 23 relevant guide questions. In this section, the qualitative data from parallel topics and categories in the interviews, FGD, and observations were integrated and discussed together. The first part of the face-to-face interviews and focus group interview questions probed the biodata information of the 12 deans and directors of the colleges from the four sampled public universities of south Ethiopia. Data from these were analysed and interpreted. The qualitative data part included the experiences of the deans and/or directors and vice-presidents, and their previous and current positions. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for universities, colleges, deans and vice-presidents.

In the second part of the presentation, Category 1, data relating to the causative factors of the underrepresentation of women from face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews, and observations are analysed. This is followed by the detailed description of Category 2, which focuses on the measures taken to tackle the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions of the HEIs, which emerged from the interviews, FGD, and observations. In Category 3, the challenges faced and the control of institutions and the government are presented and analysed according to topics in the interview guide, FGD and observation and presented and described by means of narration and description and using representative quotes and paraphrases for each category. Finally, the chapter summary is presented.

## **5.2 RESPONSE RATE**

The purpose of this study was to explore the causes for underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in the public universities of South Ethiopia. In order to realise this aim, data collection tools such as unstructured, face-to-face, and 23 individual interview questions, 23 FGD questions, 18 items on the participant observation checklist were used to obtain the major qualitative data from the respective vice-presidents, groups of college deans or directors of the four public universities of south Ethiopia – Wolaita Sodo, Wachamo, Dilla, and Hawassa. FGDs with the college deans or directors, and observation in the four universities about different actions, approaches and attitudes of university communities towards female academic staff and the offices, libraries, meeting

halls and other gender career promotion supportive issues were observed directly in the four university campuses and offices during the stay of the researcher. Using different data collection tools, all the participants provided relevant data. There were four groups for the focus group interviews of college deans or directors to provide data, and four vice-presidents participated in face-to-face and unstructured interviews, and group interviews.

All in all, a discussion was held with members of each focus group and interview was made with each vice-president. Each participant was given 23 questions as a guideline. All the items in the checklist were observed.

### **5.3 PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

This section presents the profiles of the participants who were involved in both the face-to-face interviews and FGDs. The information includes the names of the universities or colleges where the leadership positions are assumed, the previous position of responsibility, the name of the leadership position assumed; and the total number of years of experience (past + present).

The participants of both face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were asked to indicate the names of their respective colleges, their positions and their past and current experiences. This was done because it was hoped that experiences of many years in holding responsibility is an indicator of a wealth of knowledge accumulated overtime. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the names of universities, colleges, vice-presidents, and deans are coded using pseudonyms as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Participants' profiles

S.No.	Code of the university	Code of the college	Code of the participant	Position held	Experience in current position in years	Previous experience in years	Total years of experiences
1	U1	---	VP1	Vice-President for research and community service	3	8	11
		C1	D1	Dean	2	7	9
		C2	D2	Dean	3	6	9
		C3	D3	Associate Dean	2	6	8
2	U2	---	VP2	Academic affairs vice-president	3	7	10
		C4	D4	Dean	3	4	7
		C5	D5	Dean	2	5	7
		C6	D6	Dean	2	4	6
3	U3	---	VP3	Vice-president for research and community service	3	5	8
		C7	D7	Dean	2	6	8
		C8	D8	Dean	3	9	12
		C9	D9	Dean	3	8	11
4	U4	---	VP4	Academic Affairs vice-president	3	10	13
		C10	D10	Associate Dean	3	9	12
		C11	D11	Dean	3	9	12
		C12	D12	Associate Dean	2	10	12

Key:

1) VP refers to the vice-presidents= VP1, VP2, VP3, and VP4 for interviews	3) D1 – D12 = Dean 1 – Dean 12
2) Focus groups of deans and/or directors for FGD = WOF, WAF, HF, DF	4) U represents university; and
	5) C represents college.



VP1 was the vice-president for research and community services at U1. He had served as a director of institutional quality for three years, and for eight years as a lecturer, which totalled 11 years.

VP2 had been the vice-president for academic affairs at U2. He had served as a dean of the social and humanity college for three years and as a lecturer for seven years before assuming this leadership position, which came to a total of 10 years.

VP3 was the vice-president for research and community services at U3, and had served as a dean for the College of Natural and Computational Sciences for three years, and as a lecturer for five years, which added up to eight years before assuming that senior leadership position.

VP4 indicated that he had been serving in the position since 2016 and was the vice-president for academic affairs at U4 at the time of the research in 2013. As Table 5.1 reflects he had served as a dean of College of Social Sciences for three years and as a lecturer for 10 years prior to which that came to a total of 13 years.

D1 mentioned that he had been the dean of Engineering College at U1. He had served as the lecturer for seven years at U1, and for a total of nine years at the university.

D2 was the dean of Social Sciences and Humanities College at U1. He had served as the associate dean of that college for three years, as a lecturer for six years, and had served for the last nine years at the university.

D3 expressed that he had been an associate dean of Business and Economics College at U1. He had served as a lecturer at that university for the last six years, and in total for the last eight years.

D4 was the dean for college of Health and Medicine Science at U2. He had served as the head of Department of Public Health at C4 for four years and as a lecturer for three years, and had served for the last seven years at the university.

D5 said that he was the dean of the Practical Education Directorate at U2. He had served as a lecturer at U2 for five years, and had served for the last seven years at the university.

D6 was the dean for two years at U2 and had served as a lecturer for four years at U2, a total of six years.

D7 was the dean of Office of Quality Assurance at U3 and had served as a lecturer at that College of Natural and Computational Sciences at U3 for six years, and had served for the last eight years at the university.

D8 was the dean of natural and computational science college at U3. He had served as a lecturer of sport science at that college at U3 for the last nine years, and head of the department for three years, and had served for the last twelve years at the university.

D9 was the dean of Educational and Behavioural Sciences Institute at U3. He had served as the head of the Sport Sciences Department at that college at U3, and had served for the last 11 years at the university.

D10 was the associate dean of Natural and Computational Science College at U4. He had served as the head of Maths Department for three years at that college at U4, nine years as a lecturer, and had served for the last 12 years at the university.

D11 was the associate dean of Education and Behavioural Sciences College of U4. He had served as the head of department at that college for three years, and had served for the last 12 years at the university.

D12 was the dean of Social and Humanity Science College of U4. He had served as the head of Geography Department for two years, and had served for the last 12 years at the university.

## **5.4 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA**

### **5.4.1 Overview of Data Analysis Process**

Researchers are expected to carefully and sensibly present and discuss the collected data that is organised according to categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:367). Therefore, the presentation and discussion of the findings hereunder are structured into three categories, which are drawn from the qualitative data based on the main research question and sub-questions (cf. 1.4). The analysis and discussion process was based on

six steps proposed by Creswell (2009). Data collected through unstructured face-to-face interviews (jotted down notes), FGDs, and participant observations were transcribed, and I carefully read the data, coded it using the categories and themes generated for analysis, presented themes using quotations and/or paraphrases, and finally discussed it qualitatively (cf. 4.10 & 5.4). The categories were as follows:

- The causes of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in public universities of south Ethiopia;
- The measures undertaken to empower women in senior leadership positions in HEIs of the public universities of south Ethiopia;
- The challenges faced by public HEIs of south Ethiopia and the federal government to empower women in senior leadership positions in the institutions under study.

The findings from the above categories are presented in the next section.

#### **5.4.2. Presentation and Discussion of the Data Related With Causes (Category1)**

The objective of Category 1 was to explore the causes of underrepresentation of women academics in senior leadership positions in public HEIs of south Ethiopia. In this regard, the works of different leadership and management experts were reviewed to partly address and meet the above objective (cf. Chapters 2 & 3). Under this category, the researcher aimed to achieve the objective by discussing qualitative data from vice-presidents' and deans' views about the causes of the underrepresentation of women in public universities of south Ethiopia.

##### **5.4.2.1 Discussion of C1a: Effect of the absence of women in the leadership of the HEI**

Regarding the effect of the absence of women in the senior leadership position of HEIs, VP1 noted his ideas as follows:

*The absence of women in the senior leadership and management positions of institutions like ours have a tremendous impacts and effects. HEIs like ours possess relatively similar number of both male and female population – almost equal number of male and female students, instructors and administrative staff who need both male and female model leaders. However, there are no female*

*leaders in the senior positions who could have been models for the other female students and female administrative staff to aspire to move to the upper positions.*

It can be inferred from the above quotations that though there was a belief that the absence of female leaders in the top positions of HEIs and there was a relatively equal number of female and male staff and female and male students; however, there were still no women leaders in the senior positions in this university (cf. 2.3.4).

VP2 also added his response in this manner:

*... no women or few women have an ambition to assume the leadership position. This could be witnessed during the time of contest for the positions like vice-presidents and directors. In this regard, the university is still male-dominated in leadership – there is still patriarchal system of leadership in our institution. Because of this, the talents of women are missing and made the management/or leadership of the HEIs incomplete and diversity is not accommodated and the principles of democracy and even the policy of the FDRE on women are even violated. (VP2).*

From the above excerpt, one can understand that women had little interest in assuming leadership positions. They were not willing to compete or contest for leadership positions even if they were open for both men and women. Accordingly, the university system was still patriarchal and male-dominated (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.4).

VP3 noted the effect of the underrepresentation of women in the top or senior positions this way:

*Women have their own quality of leadership and management. So, institutions are missing these potentials of women.*

One can argue from the above quotation that quality of leadership and management for which women are known was missing in the HEIs. Therefore, HEIs are urged to exhaustively use the potential of women to assure quality services and quality products. It was learnt that because of such missing leadership qualities of women, institutions like this performed poorly (cf. 3.5).

Agreeing with the above ideas, VP4 explained:

*If there are both female leaders and male leaders in the institution, they can generate a lot of useful ideas for the progress of the university. So, institutions are missing this quality and faced a number of challenges.*

It can be inferred from the above quotations that from leadership diversity in sex, institutions could benefit considerably. Both men and women could generate many useful ideas for the progress of the institution. Missing such ideas of women leaders in the university could result in many challenges (cf. 3.6).

One can see from all the above quotations that there are many effects of the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of the HEIs. For instance, the organisation missed the leadership and management potential of women, which is as yet untapped. The institutions faced a shortage of role model women leadership figures who could attract other women to the education system in general and leadership and management top positions in particular. The current situation paved the way for the domination of men (cf. 3.6).

For the question related to the effect of the absence of women in their university, the Group WOF's responses are indicated below. D1 responded as follows:

*It has a number of negative effects. In the first place, more women who would have come and join higher education institutions like ours are missing, because of the absence of model women leaders in the top positions in the HEIs like ours.*

D2 noted:

*... so many problems of women instructors and female students remained unsolved because of the lack of women instructional leaders in the university in the senior positions.*

D3 also noted:

*The performance of female students became poor because of the absence of female.*

It can, therefore, be seen from the above quotations and excerpts that the absence of women has had a number of negative effects on the institution and in the larger society. Due to the absence of women, many female students and women instructors' problems remained unsolved across the institutions. Poor performance of institutions was noted (cf. 3.7.4).

In connection with the above question, another member of the group, D7 responded as follows:

*The absence of women in the senior management in our university as in other institutions made male leaders autocrats, the university a little bit dull, and less productive and leaders rigid. This made it possible for male leaders to be corrupt and negatively play the role of management freely.*

D8 responded to the above question as follows:

*The main role of instructional leadership was not played exhaustively because of lack of female leaders (who are said to be better than men in instructional leadership) in the senior leadership positions of our HEI.*

D9 also noted:

*Leadership and management of our university was not democratic because of lack of women leaders – men-dominated and patriarchal system of leadership continued. Leadership of our HEI became more of transactional, not transformational.*

It could be inferred that the absence of women in the top leadership and management positions resulted in the male-autocracy and domination, dullness of the institution and low productivity, rigid male leaders, and corruption, resulting in the absence of appropriate instructional leaders and perpetuation of the patriarchal system (cf. 3.6).

D10 responded to the above question as follows:

*Nowadays, more than ever, HEIs lacked quality graduates, lacked close instructional supervision, smooth communication, poor performance on the part of both female teachers and students, trust disappeared, corruption level increased, and scarce resources are extravagantly utilised. This all is the effect of the absence of women leaders from the top to the bottom levels of management and leadership.*

D11 added to the ideas of D10 above thus:

*Nowadays, there is poor performance of HEIs because of lack of female leaders who are known for their instructional leadership.*

D12 also noted:

*Lack of of female leaders resulted in the high prevalence of corruption in the HEIs like ours, and lack of trust as well.*

From the above quotations, it can be deduced that because of the absence of women leaders in senior leadership and management positions, HEIs lacked quality graduates in all areas of specialisation and lacked smooth communication, resulting in poor performance of students and instructors, disappearance of trust, prevalence of corruption, and extravagant utilisation of scarce resources (cf. 3.7).

Another member of WAF group, D4, responded to the above same question thus:

*The domination of men continued. And the performance of the staff and students was highly affected. Corruption prevailed.*

Agreeing with the ideas of his colleague above, D5 stated:

*The leadership talents of women remained untapped. Men and women treated unfairly though there were some male leaders who attempt to treat both fairly. Overall performance of the organisation affected seriously.*

D6, another member of WAF, shared the ideas of D4 and D5 above this way:

*The overall quality and performance of this university suffered a lot because of lack of women leaders in the senior leadership positions.*

One can infer from the above descriptions that male domination continues in the HEIs. Just like the previous ideas by other participants, here too, it could be learnt that corruption was prevalent, the natural management and leadership talents of women remained untapped, and unfair and unjust treatment between men and women academia was still the norm. Therefore, it can be concluded that the effect of the absence of women in senior leadership and management positions resulted in many problems that the government, institutions, society at large and women themselves should revisit to bring about change to their institutions, themselves, and their country (cf. 2.3.4).

All in all, according to the quotations above, the absence of women in senior leadership positions in the HEIs resulted in missing the qualities of women in leadership (cf. 3.5) and leadership diversity advantages for institutions and persons including women themselves (cf. 3.6.).



#### 5.4.2.2 Discussion of C1b: Difference that inclusion of women in the leadership of HEIs would bring

Regarding the differences that women would bring if they were included in the senior leadership positions, VP1 responded as follows:

*If women are included and diversity in senior leadership is addressed, the women themselves, the institutions, and the large society as well can benefit a lot. Women are mothers, sisters, housewives and so on. Therefore, in one way or another, if women hold senior leadership positions, institutions like ours can exploit the untapped potentials of women, efficient management of resources like financial management, human resources management, materials and property, time and even change management as witnessed by different scholars or management gurus in their works can be realised.*

He further added:

*Moreover, they can be models for other leadership and management aspiring students, instructors, administrative staffs and others in the large society. They can also bring differences for the institutions through being effective and efficient and make the institutions realise transformation of themselves and their country as well, because different minds may come with different ideas. Many students and staff as well may aspire to assume leadership position.*

One can infer from the above two quotations that from the inclusion of women in senior leadership in the HEIs, women themselves, the institutions and society could likely benefit. Women could also become role models for other aspiring women (cf. 3.6).

In connection with the above question, VP4 reflected as follows:

*Women can be models for others in the first place. Second, they can share their experience of leadership to others, support female students closely and improve their performance. Moreover, they can decrease the degree of corruption, make decision-making more democratic, and manage scarce resources efficiently.*

One can draw a lesson from the above comments that apart from being role models, women could share their experiences of leadership with others if they assumed the senior leadership positions in the HEIs. Furthermore, the probability of getting rid of corruption and undemocratic decision-making would be very likely. The efficient use of scarce resources would also be likely (cf. 3.6).

In this regard, VP3 stated:

*They would bring quality in the leadership and management of the university, because women have their own leadership quality just like that of men. For instance, they are efficient in resource management, against corruption or more trusted than others, more cooperative and democratic in leadership according to different authors as the empirical evidence shows. In this case, if institutions diversify leadership and management (particularly top management) by sex, they can bring about a lot of changes for the institutions.*

From the above quotation, it is reasonable to infer that if women assumed the leadership positions, they would bring quality of leadership and management through their wise use of resources, trust, cooperation and democratic style of leadership (cf. 3.5).

In connection with the above ideas of the previous participants, another participant coded VP2 raised his suggestions as follows:

*Inclusion of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs would increase productivity and improve the performance of the institution in general and female students and staff in particular. It may make institution achieve its goals and realise its vision as required.*

It could be inferred from the above quotation that leadership diversity would increase productivity of the organisations and performance of students and instructors as well. Moreover, it may make institutions achieve their goals and realise its visions (cf. 3.5).

All in all, it could be learnt from the above quotations of the individual participants that the inclusion of aspiring women leaders in senior leadership/or management positions would bring a number of changes for institutions. Accordingly, institutions would likely be more

efficient and effective in resource management, perform highly and get better results. Furthermore, female students and instructors would perform better. Women could get the chance to expose their potential for leadership and practise leadership and management. Moreover, women could be role models for thousands of the female population both within the education system and outside the system (cf. 3.6).

Members of the group coded WOF on their part also reflected on the inclusion of women in senior leadership positions of the HEIs. D1 responded as follows:

*Women are known for their efficient use of resources. They are also known for their participatory leadership style, high commitment, and the ability to fight corruption – that is currently the serious problems of the countries and regions as well.*

D2 agreed with his colleague:

*... if women had happened to assume the senior or top leadership positions in our university, there wouldn't have been serious corruption in the HEIs.*

D3 noted:

*...our university wouldn't have been absent in the front ranks of Ethiopian universities if women had assumed top leadership positions.*

This group attempted to relate inclusion of women in the senior leadership position with the efficient use of scarce resources, high commitment, democratic style of leadership, and better fighting of corruption (which is currently the serious problem of countries and institutions) (cf. 3.6).

For the above question, D7, a member of the DF group noted that:

*The inclusion of women in the senior management positions of the HEI like ours would bring a number of changes. It would make the work environment (both psychological and physical more attractive for all the community of the institution).*

Another member of the same group, D8, also noted that:

*... institution can likely be achievable of its core missions like teaching-learning mission, solving the problems of the society through conducting research, through community engagement, because women are known to show more organisational commitment than men.*

D9 added his ideas as follows:

*Their inclusion can avoid the ever-lived negative attitude of the society along with making the institution more productive.*

This group could connect the inclusion of women with availing of conducive and attractive work environments for the constituents, and the better achievement of the missions of the HEIs, solving the problems of society by conducting research that seeks to solve problems and through community outreach. The group related the inclusion of women in the senior leadership positions with getting rid of the negative attitude of the society against female education and women empowerment in top positions like presidency, vice-presidency, deans or directors in the HEIs (cf. 3.6 & 3.7).

D10, member of HF group, noted that:

*Women have their own leadership qualities and talents like that of men. Therefore, if they assume the senior leadership positions together with their male counterparts through applying the qualities of both, they can make the institution more productive, more competent, more trusted, exemplary and so on.*

Another member of this group, D11, repeated this idea:

*Empowering more women may result in more productivity and high performance.*

D12 also noted his ideas as follows:

*Women have their own leadership and management qualities. Therefore, if they hold the senior positions, the probability the HEIs to be competent both in the country and abroad is very wide.*

From the above quotations, it is possible to infer that diversifying leadership and management in sex has many advantages for universities (cf. 3.6).

Members of the group coded WAF also added to the previous ideas of the individuals and groups. D4, one of WAF's members, noted:

*In the institution where there are both women and men, and in the country where there are almost equal number of female and male population, the inclusion of women in the higher position of leadership and management may mean many things.*

D5, member of WAF, added:

*In the first place, that makes millions of women easily get attention and their voices are heard. Next, they become models for millions of women and female students both in the institution and outside.*

D6 also noted that:

*It may make the work environment more attractive and above all make the vision of the institution realised soon.*

From the above three quotations, it can be deduced that inclusion of women in the senior leadership and management positions of the HEIs for the large society means many things. Women are part of the society and if women benefit from their empowerment, it is the society that benefits from it indirectly. It has the power to attracting many women who are aspiring to be leaders or to reach the higher leadership and management positions. The female population of the society may be more motivated to seek such positions and awareness (cf. 3.6).

#### 5.4.2.3 Discussion of C1c: Reasons for underrepresentation of women in senior positions of leadership at HEIs

The first face-to-face interview question was presented to VP1 about the causes for the underrepresentation of women in the HEIs in the public universities of south Ethiopia. He comprehensively outlined as follows:

*The factors of underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in general and senior leadership positions in particular are deep-rooted and multifaceted in our country and institution as well. The ever-changing ideologies of the country that ignored women or favoured men more might have contributed negatively for both the education access and educational leadership – political-legal factors. On the other hand, the economic factors favour men, for example, policies and laws regarding inheritance of family property, labour laws of the country and so on might have crippled women not to move to the levels they want. For instance, millions of women, if not, thousands of female students couldn't join the education system until recently because of the economic problems. Other thousands of female students dropped out of schools (primary to tertiary) because of financial problems like lack of pocket money.*

He further explained:

*Of course, it is not denied that the current government has taken a number of affirmative-action initiatives to empower women including in education. However, because of natural and artificial problems of the country, many women have not benefited. There are still problems regarding a pool of women aspiring to move into leadership. Another serious problem regarding underrepresentation of women is that both our society and institutions are still practically negative towards women leadership. They simply try to relate the leadership with the weak physical appearance and weak strength of women. They do not want to be led by women no matter how qualified and specialised they are. Women themselves are not knowledgeable about their constitutional rights; if not, they are reluctant to fight for their rights.*

It can be deduced from the above extracts that the current governments have attempted to take a number of affirmative-action initiatives to increase women's access to education. However, these have been hampered by unfavourable economic factors, society's negative attitudes towards women's education and leadership, the consistently negative ideologies of the country against women, institutional barriers, the misconception about women's lack of physical fitness for leadership and management, and the economic laws that are pro-men and anti-women. Moreover, women's illiteracy about the existing laws adds to their underrepresentation in senior leadership and management positions of the public HEIs of south Ethiopia. This is in line with Shah and Shah (2012:33) who stated, "there are some broadly shared factors for the underrepresentation of women in leadership like public versus domestic attitude of the society, gender-power relations, and role stereotyping". Again Bunyi (2004:13) and Genet (2014:33) strengthened this by saying, "the low participation of women in the HEIs in Africa is attributed to many socio-cultural, economic, and gender-blind institutional structures that has currently got attention of the Ethiopian government" (cf. 2.3 & 3.4).

Concurring with VP1 above, VP4 related the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions as follows:

*Women are hugely underrepresented because they are not willing to assume leadership positions. This may be because of negative socialisation of women by society from early childhood. As a result of this, they have developed inferiority complex. They do not want to raise questions or make suggestions in public. They seem not to know the law of the country fully. That is what the constitution and other policies like women policy of the country say about the empowerment of women. Consequently, they do not use these to defend their rights.*

It can be inferred from the above description that women's negative socialisation by society from early childhood seems to have made them develop an inferiority complex and not to aspire to top positions of leadership and management even if they are highly educated (cf. 2.3 & 3.4).

VP4 further cited the age of universities as one of the causes of low or lack of participation of women in the senior leadership positions in the respective universities. He noted that both public and private universities in Ethiopia are relatively new and have no track records or policies of empowering women. He further argued that:

*Underrepresentation of women is partly because in Ethiopia women have been ignored for a long time because of the patriarchal society that has existed for centuries. It is not fair simply to criticise the existing men, systems and the government for their failure to get rid of women's underrepresentation overnight. Women themselves should take decisive steps to emancipate themselves. Moreover, the overall economic and technological backwardness of the country contributes to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in higher education in Ethiopia.*

According to VP4, the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within the Ethiopian higher education system, could be attributed to the non-existence of HEIs in Ethiopia until recently; women's lack of commitment to rise to and be empowered for leadership positions; and the deep-rooted patriarchal system or male domination in the country (cf. 2.3 & 3.4).

For his part, VP3 framed the causes of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions at his university this way:

*To me, though their degrees vary, all the socio-cultural, political-legal, and economic factors as well as institutional factors affect the representation of women in senior leadership positions. But the main ones are socio-cultural and women personal reasons. The issue of queen bee syndrome – the already empowered women (though insignificant in numbers), they are not willing to bring other aspiring women to leadership positions. For instance, the MPs women are typical examples.*

From the above description, it would seem that over and above, the economic, political-legal, institutional, the socio-cultural factors and women's personal reasons were the main



drivers of their underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs of south Ethiopia (cf. 2.3).

VP2 also revealed that women were underrepresented in senior leadership positions at his university. When asked about the causes of this, he raised the same issues of political-legal, socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors (cf. 2.3). However, he stressed the institutional structure, women's personal reasons and socio-cultural problems as the main causes. He also had this to say:

*In some cases, top male leaders lack consistency in their talk and walk. In this case, women lack trust in such male leaders and become hopeless whenever they think of becoming potential leaders. For instance, in the case of our university, our presidents promised to approve the research budgets and requested some female academic staff to prepare research and community service project proposals. A month later, they were made to defend their project proposals, but later on, more than half of those women were told that their proposals for both the research and the community services had failed. Later on, when asked about what had happened, the women said that they lacked trust in their leaders so much that they had decided not to do anything with their top leaders, let alone leading with them.*

He continued as follows:

*A shortage of up-to-date and special, digital libraries with leadership and management reference materials and periodicals, and well-equipped laboratories, are also one of the causes of the underrepresentation or absence of aspiring women leaders in senior leadership positions in higher education in Ethiopia including mine. There are no recent and relevant leadership and management books, journal articles, magazines, and newspapers. Furthermore, there are no trends in our university on the teaching staff who developed teaching materials and reading and writing scholarly materials including women academics themselves.*

As mentioned in the above descriptions, it can be seen that institutional, socio-cultural, and women's personal reasons were the most pressing problems of women

underrepresentation in senior leadership positions. Along with this, shortage of facilities and materials, leadership-related problems on the part of existing top-level male leaders, and their lack of consistency, were found to be other pressing problems (cf. 2.3.1, 2.3.2 & 2.3.4).

In addition to the face-to-face interviews with the vice-presidents, FGDs were conducted with four groups of four public universities made up of twelve members (three from each university) at different times. In this regard, the first question about the underrepresentation of women was: “What are reasons for the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in the HEIs?”

The group coded WOF was the focus group at U1. Having arranged the discussion with them prior to the meeting, the researcher presented questions for discussion on all the three categories – causes of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions, measures taken by the authorities in different leadership positions, and the challenges they encountered.

In this regard, D1 pointed out that the top management was not willing to promote women staff. He went on to say comprehensively as follows:

*Top management implicitly discourage women staff not to move to the top leadership positions and top academic ranks. They do not encourage women academic staff to publish journal articles needed as a prerequisite to meet the promotion criteria to assistant and associate professorship. Furthermore, they do not care for amending male-supporting old policies of HEIs. In addition, they do not give priority for women to scholarship and other short and midterm training for capacity-building. In this regard, a female staff gets no special affirmation equally with male instructors.*

He further noted:

*Even sometimes men are given priority when they officially compete with women in public and show equal performance, which highly discourages women not to aspire to senior leadership positions. Therefore, the main causes of the underrepresentation in senior leadership position is lack of a clear system for promotion of women. In addition to that, being from other disciplines, male leaders lack experience on this and confidence in women. Besides this, lack of commitment, a shortage of women academics, and lack of women aspiring to leadership positions are some of the reasons for their underrepresentation.*

From the above two quotations of D1, it can be inferred that the top management of this university failed to provide the opportunity for the aspiring women for capacity-building training in the country and abroad and failed to fulfil the prerequisites for promotion and empowerment of women to higher positions and ranks. For instance, the top management should have given women the opportunity to publish journal articles through different strategies in order to help women meet the promotion and empowerment criteria. Moreover, this university did not have a system geared to promotion of the leadership and management of aspiring women. It was learnt that sometimes this university was found to prioritise men even though both men and women were equal in the academic status (cf. 3.7.4).

Another group member, D2 continued by saying:

*Women have developed an inferiority complex because of the established patriarchy that exists in the political and economic systems of the country that have resulted in male domination. This is exacerbated by the economic dependence of women on men both at home and at work. Even with their incomes, we ask our wives what they have done with their salaries. But we, men do not allow them to ask us what we did with our salaries. This also shows that partly they are not economically free yet. In addition, women biologically need more resources such as money for their consumption. But men do not understand this.*

A lesson could be drawn from the above quotation that women were socialised into the negative attitude of the society and developed inferiority complex. It was learnt that

women still remained economically dependent both at home and in the institutions where they work. This means that husbands attempt to control even the salaries of their wives. This indicates that women are not economically free to do as they please (cf. 2.3.2 & 2.3.4).

Again, D3 added that:

*Women are reluctant to hold leadership positions. They are not willing to attend the meetings on different gender issues. They are reluctant to ask questions, to make suggestions, and are often not punctual to the meetings. Sometimes they choose not to attend some meetings. They are halfhearted and half present in meetings. Their hearts are always at home – psychologically they are often at home. Male leaders think that women leaders are stronger in fighting corruption. Therefore, they do not want women to join their leadership and management club fearing that they (women) may close doors for corruption later on. So, even if women are competent in the contest, indirectly they are kept out. This is done repeatedly at U1.*

It can be deduced from the above quotation that women are not willing to assume the leadership position on one hand, and on the other hand, since men think that women are stronger than men in fighting corruption, they fear women empowerment and implicitly fight against women (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.4).

Furthermore, D3, being surprised, said,

*I had exposure to different meetings with top management. However, they had no special agenda on empowering women.*

He further explained:

*The same is true at school levels. Many female students should have been empowered in different clubs and co-curricular activities as chairpersons and secretaries so that they could exercise potential leadership. School masters should have done this to create more potential women leaders. As this is one of the useful strategies to get potential leaders.*

D1 raised the same issue thus:

*Universities, in collaboration with governments of different levels inside and partners throughout the world, should have provided leadership capacity-building through short, mid, and long-term training for women.*

He further explained:

*Sometimes women are fired or demoted to undesirable positions without adequate reasons. This was true at U1. A woman, head of the office of the president was fired from the office by the president because of a minor and unconvincing reason. Later on, looking at her demotion, tens of women aspiring to different leadership positions quashed their ambitions for fear of being treated like her. (cf. 2.3.4).*

In connection with the above question, D2 noted that:

*Some women are against the affirmative action made for women. They say that 'affirmative action is an implicit and modern way of making women develop an inferiority complex. So, it should be avoided, because it is a simple manipulation and political propaganda to make women silent. It even aggravates the historical mistakes and violence of men.' Moreover, the physical and psychological work environment is not conducive for women to aspire to leadership positions. For instance, top leaders are not happy to employ women, let alone empower them. This shows that the psychological environment is not conducive for the aspiring women leaders.*

From the above quotation, it is possible to infer that some women have a negative attitude regarding the affirmative action initiative of the government. Top leaders were not happy to employ and empower women (cf. 2.3.1).

All in all, this group focused on the implicit and explicit violence instigated particularly by men in top-level management; lack of knowledge on how to empower women in top leadership positions; lack of interest in amending the already tight legislation against aspiring women leaders; and failure to support women to publish journal articles needed for promotion to the upper positions of leadership. It could also be deduced that some

women were against affirmative action. The group members indicated that the work environment was not conducive for women to take up leadership and management positions, because there was no capacity-building or training for women to assume leadership positions. They reported that men were given preference for capacity-building training on leadership while women were reluctant even to attend such training to get exposure. From the above extracts, it could be deduced that women do not attend meetings and are unwilling to participate in meetings (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.4).

DF was also a focus group code at U3. When asked about the causes for the underrepresentation of women in their university, D7 reflected as follows:

*Though the Federal Government stipulated in the policy of women that one fourth of the vice-presidents of HEIs should be women, all the positions and offices of the vice-presidents are still held by men, which shows that men who hold the administrative positions and the government, are reluctant to practically empower women in senior positions of higher education institutions in Ethiopia. This indicates that they still lack confidence in the leadership capabilities of women.*

He further asserted that:

*For instance, recently, three women academic staff with the second degree, applied for the positions of registrar, and other senior positions in publication directorate, and continuing Education office. Unfortunately, only men got the positions though women performed better, which shows that there is gender bias against women in universities. There is also insufficient implementation of affirmative-action programmes in HEIs as stipulated in the constitution and women policy of the country. There is a mismatch between the stipulated affirmative action and implementation on the ground, which leads to underrepresentation of women in senior leadership and management positions of our university.*

One can infer from these above quotations that there is a mismatch between the existing policy and the implementation of empowering women on the ground. Moreover, the male top leaders and managers who have already assumed the leadership positions are reluctant to empower women and they have no confidence in women. There is an implicit

violence against women aspiring to leadership by their male counterparts. There is a mismatch between affirmative-action programmes and their implementation (cf. 2.3.3 & 2.3.4).

Another member in the same group, D8 said the following:

*Women can still be considered as economic parasites for men though they are paid equal salaries in their workplaces. The husband is not asked about his salary or to share it equally with his wife. But it is the wife who purchases most of the groceries and other items for monthly consumption at home, yet the husband is not asked about his monthly salary. He spends most of his time away from home with his friends and peers enjoying themselves. In contrast, the wife does not look out for more enjoyable pastimes and for jobs that pay good salaries. She has no time to search for fun and more paying jobs.*

It is reasonable to infer from the above quotation that there is still male dominance on economic aspects over women. Women have no freedom to search for better jobs outside. They spend much of their time at home and become busy caring for the entire family (cf. 2.3.2 & 2.3.5).

Agreeing with the ideas of D8 above, D9 asserted:

*Due to lack of exposure to the external world, a woman lacks not only money but also experience and opportunity to exercise leadership. Due to this she does not aspire to climb up the ladder to higher leadership positions that were historically occupied by men. This situation makes women power-phobic. Moreover, male leaders do not recognise the natural talents of women regarding the efficient use of resources, democratic style of leadership, their brain anatomy, and their natural commitment to do something if they are supposed to do. Top leaders are not aware of the benefit of diversity of men and women in leadership and management of higher education institutions.*

One would agree with the above excerpt that women lack both economic benefit and experience of leadership because of lack of exposure to the external world. This results

in a lack of aspiration to leadership on the part of women. Moreover, it could be seen here that men are not aware of the natural talents and benefits derived from diversity of leaders and that they fail to give recognition to women leaders (cf. 2.3.2, 2.3.4, & 2.3.5).

Another member of the group coded HF at U4, D10, stressed the following issues:

*Women seem to be legally illiterate. They do not seem to have been literate about their own constitutional rights and even the benefits of assuming the top leadership and management positions at universities. They hate leadership profession because they consider it as complex and complicated profession. They argue that the incentive for the leadership and management positions is not attractive. Furthermore, there is no special research budget for women academic staff to conduct research, to publish articles, to fulfil criteria for applying to the senior leadership positions and to assume those positions.*

He further elaborated as follows:

*Again, though there was an attempt to involve women in research defence, they used it for political consumption, and they could not conduct research on both their rights related problems and the societal problems, and this impacted their promotion to the higher academic rank and higher leadership positions as well.*

It can be observed from the above quotations that women seemed to be illiterate about the existing policies and the benefits of assuming leadership positions both for themselves and the institutions. Women seemed to consider the leadership profession as complicated and think that both the salary and position allowances are unattractive. It also seemed that there was no attractive or special research budget for women to meet the criteria of empowerment and promotion for women (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.4).

Agreeing with the above quotation, D11 stated:

*Lack of knowledge on the part of women, society and institutions as well take lion's share for the underrepresentation of women in the said positions. Women are half of the population of the country and nowadays institutions as well. They are highly talented and gifted in management and leadership since their childhood. However,*



*many people are not more aware about this fact, including women themselves. Their benefit is the benefit of the society. Women are mothers, sisters, and spouses as well.*

He added:

*But many people are not aware of this reality and this resulted in the low or no women leaders in senior leadership positions. Other problems as causes were lack of residence houses, day care programmes and centres, low salary, lack of incentives, network among women academia both inside and outside the university, lack of special libraries, laboratories, meeting halls, lounges, toilets, restrooms with sanitations, and lack of women forum or strong forum.*

As stated above, one can understand that women themselves, society at large, and the HEIs are not aware of the number, talents and advantages of empowering women. This resulted in the underrepresentation of women in the senior leadership positions of the HEIs. Other problems attributed to low representation of women were lack of networks among women academia, low salaries and incentives, and issues like basic needs such as ablutions (cf. 2.3.1, 2.3.2, & 2.3.4).

Another member of this group, D12 further responded as follows:

*Though there are few women who are knowledgeable and skillful in the area of management and leadership, they move to other businesses to make attractive money and business. They also say that the approaches of some top leaders do not attract the aspiring women to leadership position in general and top leadership position in particular. Some top leaders seem to have no human skill to attract women, and others seem to implicitly discourage women not to come to leadership positions and even hate them and intentionally seem to demote them. They seem to have been absorbed in hating women and developed hatred in women – they have no confidence in women.*

One would agree with the above quotation that there is turnover of women academics to different institutions for better and more attractive salaries and incentives that resulted in

low representation of women in senior leadership positions in the HEIs. This was also true because of lack of the human skill of the already empowered men in top positions of leadership, because the approaches of some male leaders were not attractive to the women aspiring to leadership (cf. 2.3.4 & 2.3.5).

WAF was the focus group at U2. A member of this group, D4, raised reasons for the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions as follows:

*There is still an imbalance between the workload at home and workplace. Hence women get no time to think about leadership like every time work. On the other hand, there is no day care service by the higher institution and the government as well as promised for those female academic staff who are married and have babies to take care of or nurse. Therefore, women are still overburdened and double-burdened to think about leadership and management...*

He added:

*Therefore, women continued to be victims to the negative attitudes and actions of the institutional community and the large society as well. They do not dare to ask questions even related with their rights during different meetings and conferences held during different times. Furthermore, they do not seem to have been familiar with the existing constitution and other relevant policies of the country regarding their rights – they are legally illiterate. Moreover, women are not able to use their time wisely at home and workplace.*

In connection with the above idea, D5, one of the members of the same group, also said say that he had a wife who worked with him at the university. He said that though she had time at home and at work, she was reluctant to raise issues about leadership and even to read books on leadership. He had to say,

*She shows hopelessness on assuming the leadership position. Women are not eager to know the rules, regulations and country-wide policies.*

Another member in the group added that:

*Women consider themselves as inferior to male counterparts and think the leadership profession as if difficult for women. They relate it with the physical and biological factor; not with the mental capacity.*

He also related 'queen bee syndrome' to the underrepresentation of women saying:

*...even few women that held the lower positions in administrative wing in the university are not willing to bring up other women to the leadership position; they are rather implicitly discouraging other women not to come to the leadership positions. (cf. 2.3.1).*

D6 further explained that:

*Priority is given for men regarding promotion and positions of leadership and management. This is done both implicitly and explicitly. For instance, the senate legislation itself is not written in the way that encourages women promotion to the higher academic ranks, and no special attention was mentioned to be done for women. No women-research related issues were listed in the senate legislation. Furthermore, there is a contradiction between the senate legislation and the constitution of the country – the HEIs should have taken into consideration what the constitution says regarding empowering women...*

Concurring with D6 above, D4 further stated that:

*Furthermore, there should have been monitoring and evaluation procedures by the federal governments whether universities take measures regarding empowering women or not – they shouldn't have left it without crosschecking though the universities are autonomous. It is still the Federal Government that should take the lion's share to implement policies and empower both male and female citizens. The position allowances are also not attractive for the aspiring women leaders to assume the leadership position at all positions of leadership and management.*

D5 and D6 also similarly noted that there was still negative attitude of the society regarding women leadership by stating unanimously taking turn as:

*If a woman leader comes late in the evening because of, for instance, the extended meeting, she is considered as illegal, unethical, and even as she committed adultery, and she is untrusted by both her husband and neighbours. Due to such things, she usually lack freedom and exposure to exercise leadership both at home and at workplace, and she lacks interest, confidence, and commitment in the leadership profession (D6).*

From all the above quotations of same group members, one can argue that even if women assumed leadership positions, they were given little freedom both at home by their husbands and at their institutions by their colleagues. This results in lack of love of the profession, commitment, confidence, and exposure to exercising leadership on the part of aspiring women. Though the government still holds responsibility to empower women at the HEIs, there is no consistent monitoring and evaluation system to check whether universities are empowering women or not. It also emerged that the current position allowance for senior leadership positions is not very attractive for women academic staff aspiring to leadership (cf. 2.3.2, 2.3.3, & 2.3.5).

Participants were also asked whether women were underrepresented in their respective universities together with the question related to causes for the underrepresentation. VP1 was asked first about the reality of the absence of women in senior leadership positions and whether he believed in the importance of leadership of women or not in the senior leadership position. He responded comprehensively in the following way:

*Yes. In the first place I believe that women in our university are underrepresented not only in the senior leadership positions, but also in both the middle and lower levels. However, I believe in the leadership of women from different angles – they have the right to be empowered, because they are half the population of the institutions like ours and the country as well.*

He further noted:

*Secondly, they are as talented as their male counterparts according to some literature and empirical evidence. Thirdly, both the women and the large society including the scientific community failed to benefit from the untapped potential of*

*the women leadership. There should have been diversity in the senior leadership positions, because both women and men have their quality in leadership and management of organisations like ours...*

It is logical to infer from the above two descriptions that women are underrepresented in all levels of leadership and management. On the other hand, it is learnt that women have the right to be empowered because they are half the population both in the HEIs and in the country as well (cf. 2.3.3).

Just like the previous participants, VP4 and VP2 on their part believed that there was an underrepresentation of women in their respective universities, both at top levels and other levels of leadership and management saying that:

*Not only in senior positions, but also women are underrepresented in all levels of leadership and management in our university (VP2).*

VP3 also believed that women were underrepresented in his university saying,

*Women are underrepresented though currently there are two recently appointed vice-presidents who were passively playing their roles in light of bringing more women to the senior leadership positions in their university.*

Members of the groups coded WOF, WAF, DF, and HF (D1-D12) also believed in the underrepresentation of women in the senior leadership positions of leadership in their respective universities, agreeing that women were underrepresented in their universities at all levels of leadership and management.

It can be concluded here that all the participants of the four public universities agreed on the underrepresentation of women academics in all leadership positions of the HEIs in general and in the senior or top leadership positions of their respective universities in particular.

#### 5.4.2.4 Discussion of C1d: Making leadership of HEIs democratic

Regarding the democratisation process of HEIs leadership and management, the participants of the study responded as follows.

First, VP1 put forward his suggestions on how to make leadership democratic this way:

*Democratisation of leadership and management between men and women is essential for various reasons: (1) when women and men get together and are made to lead together, they can generate their own unique ideas and talents – both have their own leadership qualities, (2) democratisation is essential because of the rights of women and they are half the population, (3) through democratisation, it is not only the women but also the entire society can benefit. Hence, taking into account this, all the selection and recruitment policies of institutions should be transparent, and women can freely enjoy their rights.*

One can infer from the above quotation that though democratisation of leadership and management is essential and the entire society is believed to benefit from it in such institutions, yet there is a gap in this regard that should be bridged soon. Furthermore, it is advisable that there should be transparent recruitment and selection criteria and policies in such HEIs so that everybody can enjoy their rights (cf. 2.3.4).

In connection with the above question, VP4 put forward his suggestions in this manner:

*HEIs and the government which is the owner of the HEIs together with others can democratise leadership by designing the comprehensive and all-inclusive policies – gender-sensitive, implementing or putting them on the ground, and monitoring and evaluating the degree of implementation, including women empowerment can reveal democratisation of leadership in HEIs. Furthermore, they can create awareness about the principles of democracy on the part of both university community and the large society.*

The above quotation of VP4 emphasised that a strong democratic system should be developed in HEIs. This could be realised through designing all-inclusive and comprehensive, gender-sensitive policies and strategies of implementation. Furthermore, emphasis was also given to the development of monitoring and evaluation systems of this democratisation in the HEIs (cf. 2.3.4).

To the same question, VP3 also responded:

*Before thinking about the democratisation of leadership in HEIs, it is the must first to democratise training all women and men on leadership and management to make them competent through making knowledgeable and skillful. Because this is the position that requires high level of knowledge and skill. Then, creating the transparent system about selection and appointment it is possible to make leadership and management democratic.*

From the above quotation, one can infer that in order to democratise leadership and management, training on leadership and management for all the aspiring women and men is essential to develop their competence. Democratisation of leadership and management between men and women without knowledge and skill is meaningless (cf. 2.3.4).

In connection with the above question, VP2 responded this way:

*First of all, awareness should be created about the ownership of the institution – it belongs to both male and female population of the institutions and the society as well. Second, it is imperative to make each and every activity of the university transparent for all its constituents – each and every competent citizen can equally play the game together. Furthermore, institutions should give equal or fair opportunity of capacity-building training for all the citizens to relatively balance their knowledge and skill to make both women and men compete equally for the leadership and management of the university.*

It is seen in the above quotation that exclusion of women from leadership and management should be stopped. HEIs like other institutions belong to the larger society, not only to men. Moreover, it was stressed that all activities of the HEIs should be transparent for the entire community. It was argued that members of the community should get equal opportunities for capacity-building training to allow both women and men to compete equally and fairly (cf. 3.6).

From the above interviews with the four individual participants, it can be concluded that there are a number of strategies to democratise and diversify leadership and management of the HEIs democratised. Raising awareness for all about the ownership

of HEIs is one of the strategies. In addition, there must be transparency regarding the recruitment, selection and empowerment of individuals. Awareness creation about the principles of democracy, rights, fairness in capacity-building training, and equality is essential according to the participants. In other words, this is equivalent to diversifying leadership among women and men (cf. 3.6 & 3.7.2.).

With regard to what should be done to democratise their university, D1, a member of WOF, responded as follows:

*Democratising or diversifying university leadership is not only for the benefit of women. It should be done for the benefit of the institution and the country as well. Therefore, taking this into account, the government in collaboration with HEIs should create preconditions to empower both women and men in the HEIs...*

D2, another member of WOF, added to the above idea thus:

*The government should provide different capacity-building training for both women and men, and awareness creation for all regarding the importance of both women and men leadership and management – diversifying leadership.*



D3 strengthened the ideas of D1 and D2 above as follows:

*The government, taking into consideration the importance of diversity, should capacitate women like that of men through different training strategies..*

One can draw a lesson from the above quotations that by diversifying leadership of senior positions in the HEIs, women themselves, institutions and the country would likely benefit. Thus, the government, institutions and women themselves should take responsibility to empower women (cf. 3.6).

In connection with the above question, in the DF group, D7 noted that:

*Institutions should forge the culture of democratising the leadership and management through holding different discussions and programmes and be able to implement the existing empowerment policy through teaching democratic principles of countries, regions, and the globe.*

Another member of the same group, D8, strengthened the ideas raised by D7 as follows:

*Higher Educations Institutions should practice democracy and incorporate this to diversified leadership and management.*

D9 of the same group highlighted the importance of democratising the management and leadership of HEIs as follows:

*More and diversified individuals in gender may generate different useful ideas for the organisations like HEIs. Therefore, democratising the process of leadership and management is essential.*

It can be observed from the above quotations that democratisation of leadership and management through empowering women should be mandatory for institutions and the government (cf. 3.7.3).

In connection with the above question, a member of the HF group, D10, noted:

*First of all, there should be awareness creation for all the university community that the HEIs belong to all. Next, that he/or she who is competent enough to lead and manage have equal right.*

D11 also suggested that:

*The government should take part in the implementation of empowering women and availing democracy in the HEIs.*

D12 mentioned that:

*Though HEIs are said to be autonomous, however, the owner of it, the MOSHE should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system of universities through the regular positive intervention and discussion with universities and the issue of empowering women who are half of the population.*

All the above quotations tell us that there should be a strong monitoring and evaluation system in the HEIs regarding empowerment of women, and the government, together with the HEIs, should assure the prevalence of democracy (cf. 2.3.3). In connection with this, D4 of the WAF group stated the following:

*In the first place, there should be transparent employment criteria for both women and men. There should be as many numbers of both men and women academia in the pool of intellectuals. In order to bridge the historical gap in the management and leadership positions of the HEI like ours, there should be the procedure of appointing women whenever, they are defeated by their male counterparts in the competition for the top leadership positions...*

D5 of the same group responded to the question as follows:

*Women should get opportunity to be assigned as leaders and managers at the lower positions to practice leadership and management before coming to the top positions. Above all, taking into account that democratic leadership is advisable in*

*the situation where the leaders and the followers are of relatively equal level of knowledge and skill...*

D6, a member of the same group, added to the ideas of his colleagues as follows:

*Women in academia should be made competent with their male counterparts through different types and levels of leadership and management training.*

From the above quotations of the group members, it can be deduced that the government should provide capacity-building training as a precondition for both the aspiring female and male constituents of the HEIs taking into account that leadership and management of this level requires competency. Furthermore, the groups urged the MOSHE to exercise monitoring and controlling over the public HEIs regarding the extent of empowering women. In other words, these quotations imply that there was no adequate capacity-building training on the part of the Federal Government who is the owner of the HEIs in Ethiopia (cf. 2.3.3 & 2.3.4).

#### 5.4.2.5 Discussion of C1e: What would promote cooperation among teams of HEI

VP1 first put forward his ideas comprehensively regarding what would promote cooperation between men and women in the HEIs and society as follows:

*Cooperation among women and men particularly in the higher education institutions can be promoted in many ways. First, there should be gender-sensitive policy. Secondly, there should be monitoring and evaluation system by the government in ensuring this. Next, there should be awareness creation programmes for all the concerned bodies regarding the importance of women leadership and their being mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives – if they benefit something, it is the society that benefits. So, through such awareness creation, more cooperation among women and men could be created and hostility and subtle and implicit male violence can be reduced.*

This excerpt shows that the presence of awareness creation, a strong monitoring and evaluation system, existence of a gender-sensitive policy and the like may create strong cooperation among all the constituents of the university. Through this subtle and implicit

hostility may be eliminated to allow for the cooperation among women and men of the HEIs (cf. 2.3.4).

Concurring with VP1 above, VP4 stated the following:

*First of all, there should be awareness creation programmes within the university community about the importance of women in the leadership and management qualities. People should be made aware that women are as knowledgeable and skillful as men, they are our mothers who gave lives for us, and they are sisters and wives. In other words, we are a family, and their benefit is our benefit. If we do like this, we can easily gain cooperation between women and the institutional cooperation.*

This excerpt strengthened the above idea by stressing the importance of awareness creation about the importance of women leadership and women-related aspects – their quality in leadership, their closeness and kinship in the family and so on (cf. 3.5).

On the same question, VP3 raised his suggestions as follows:

*Only the avoidance of the negative attitude towards women and making women literate about their rights and duties through training and capacitating on leadership and exposing them to leadership and management to show others about their talents may make them gain cooperation from the others.*

The above quotation put emphasis on getting rid of the negative attitudes towards women so as to gain cooperation between women and men at the university. Moreover, it was stressed that making women literate about their rights and duties through training on different policies and issues which is part of leadership and management is thought to strengthen cooperation and unity among women and men (cf. 2.3.1, 2.3.2 & 2.3.4).

VP2 also stated that:

*Institutions should first develop systems to respect and accept laws. Then should provide training by stressing the importance of cooperation between men and women to achieve the common goal of the organisation.*

One can deduce from the above quotation that institutions like this should give emphasis on the system development regarding the acceptance and respect of law. This tells us that if justice is prevalent in institutions like this and if women are interested in the leadership profession and competent enough for the positions, there is no reason why women cannot assume the senior leadership position (cf. 2.3.1, 2.3.3 & 2.3.4).

From the above quotations of participants above regarding what would promote cooperation between men and women, many lessons can be drawn. Accordingly, they suggested that HEIs should develop systems for accepting and respecting laws. Then they urged the institutions and the government to provide training on the importance of cooperation among teams. They also focused on avoidance of the negative attitude of the society and male staff against women in leadership and management. They gave emphasis to the identities of women which include the fact that they are our mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters. They also explained that there is a strong relationship between men and women that may strengthen the cooperation between them. This is in line with the government efforts and policies though there is still a mismatch between the government policies on paper and their implementation on the ground regarding women empowerment (cf. 3.8.).

D1 of the WOF group also responded as follows:

*Avoiding hostility among male and female staff members, avoiding the wrong perception about the ability of women regarding their leadership, can likely enhance cooperation among the staff...*

D2 of the same group also noted that:

*Exposing women to leadership and management to make them show their talents and so on can likely promote cooperation between and among teams of the HEIs of south Ethiopia.*

D3 of the same group supported the ideas of his colleagues as follows:

*Awareness creation among the staff about the quality of both women and men in leadership is likely to promote cooperation among teams.*

One can draw a lesson that exposing women to different leadership and management and creating awareness among people about the quality and talents of women is very important (cf. 3.8).

D7 (of DF group) noted that:

*Along with other solutions, getting rid of the attitude 'women and men are unequal' is the best means to gain cooperation among all the constituents of the institution.*

D8 of the same group stated his ideas as follows:

*It is better if all the members of the institution get aware about the importance of team management and leadership of both women and men.*

D9, a member of the same group, supported the above ideas as follows:

*Both men and women together can bring about change for their common institution, and common country as well. Therefore, there should always be cooperation and team spirit between and among all staff of the institution.*

It can be inferred from the above quotations that change can be brought about when senior leadership position is shared among women and men in the HEIs. Moreover, it was clear that the negative attitude towards women should be avoided to ensure equality between women and men (cf. 3.8).

When asked the question "What do you think would promote cooperation among the team of the institution?", D10 of the HF group responded as follows:

*Sound, fair and just leadership and positive attitudes of male leaders together with sound communication, consistency, and commitment may improve cooperation among individual members of the HEIs.*

D11 of the same group added his same ideas as:

*Transparency and competency on the part of existing male leaders can promote cooperation among the teams of the institution.*

D12 noted:

*Cooperation, commitment, and sound communication on the part of leaders may enhance cooperation among female and male staff.*

What one can infer from the above quotations is that male leaders who have already assumed senior leadership positions may bring about significant change in the empowerment of women (if they are interested in women leadership). Their transparency, commitment, sound communication, their competency, along with other factors may enhance cooperation among the community of the university (cf. 2.3.4).

In connection with the above question, D4 of WAF group also commented that:

*Cooperation among women and men in the organisation may be improved if the institution develops the system of equal treatment. Next, cooperation can be strengthened when members of the organisation are relatively of the same purpose, knowledge, skill, vision, and philosophy of thinking as well.*

D5, another member of the same group, noted that:

*It is up to the institution to envision its visions among the constituents, promote knowledge and skill levels of both women and men academia to relatively balance the level of their knowledge and skill to promote the cooperation among them.*

D6 further strengthened the above ideas as follows:

*Fairness is very essential. Therefore, it is up to the government and HEIs to work hard to promote cooperation among the staff through different strategies.*

It can be seen in the above quotations that in order to promote cooperation between the teams, a number of strategies can be implemented. They put forward suggestions that there should be a positive attitude, justice, and fairness on the part of male leaders and managers who have already assumed leadership and management positions towards women to promote cooperation among all. The common hostility should be avoided according to the groups. The institutions should develop the system of equal treatment and leaders and managers should share their visions among their constituents. Moreover,

they stressed consistency on the part of leaders to promote cooperation. They further stressed commitment and sound communication of the male leaders and managers who have already assumed the senior positions (cf. 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3 & 3.4.4).

#### 5.4.2.6 Discussion of C1f: What would make leadership environment conducive for women

Individuals and groups were asked the question: “What would make the leadership environment conducive for women?” First, VP1 noted what HEIs should do to make the work environment conducive to the aspiring women leaders the following lessons:

*It is not denied that in order to attract and retain the more aspiring women in the leadership position, work environment should be attractive. Therefore, leaders who have already assumed the top leadership positions, in collaboration with the government and the large society should create awareness about the leadership diversity for the community, provide training, avail the necessary services for the female academia – different offices, well-equipped libraries, residence houses, transportation, lounges, position allowances, decent salaries, good relationships and so on.*

It is suggested that in order to retain and attract the women aspiring to leadership, those men who have already assumed the top leadership positions, together with the other concerned bodies, should make the work (leadership & management environment) conducive through mechanisms such as timely provision of the relevant materials and facilities (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

In connection with the above question, VP2 stated that:

*Availing all the necessary materials at the library, laboratory, lounges, classrooms, offices, residence houses, transportation accessibility, improving the positional allowances and salaries of the leaders attractive, and reducing the workload for women taking in to account the load of work at home, and accessing the day care service for married women who have babies who feed breastmilk.*



The above quotation gave emphasis to the material and facility provision including different buildings and services as well as improving different benefits and reducing teaching workload for women staff in light of providing sufficient time for women to prepare themselves for leadership and management (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

To make the leadership environment conducive, the participant coded VP3 also made the following suggestions:

*First of all, institutions should make women love the profession of leadership. Unless they are interested and motivated in the profession itself, nothing can make the work environment conducive. So, institutions should work hard to make the work environment conducive through availing different materials and training, incentives, making structures and cultures of the environment clear, simple, attractive for women and so on.*

According to VP3 above, women should first develop positive attitudes towards the leadership and management professions. In order to ensure this, institutions are urged to work hard to make the work environment conducive to the aspiring women. In order to do so, different materials and facilities, different relevant training, incentives, sound organisational cultures and structures should be provided (cf. 2.3.1, 2.3.4 & 3.8).

Asked about what HEI should do for women to make the leadership or management environment conducive, VP4 answered as follows:

*HEIs should reduce the workload for women teaching staff taking into account that they are overloaded both at home and workplace. Furthermore, training on leadership importance, quality of women leadership, their potential, talents, abilities and so on should be provided side by side with leadership training. Attractive incentives like leadership position allowances and other benefits should be provided for women. Again, cooperation of men towards women aspiring leaders from men should be gained through different consultative meetings.*

The above quotation gave emphasis to an attractive environment along with cooperation among all the university community. Furthermore, different training and the reduction of

workload for the women teaching staff to provide them with sufficient time to think about leadership was emphasised (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

Therefore, it can be argued that to make the leadership and management environment conducive for the aspiring women leaders and managers, workload and work burden should be reduced both at home and in the workplace; and attractive incentives including position allowances, sound salaries, and other fringe benefits, appropriate residences for leaders, and materials, facilities, offices and so on should be provided. Considering these factors, institutions and the government are expected to make the women aspiring to leadership look forward the leadership and management profession by first making the psychological work environment conducive and attractive for women (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

For the question “what would your institution do to make leadership or management environment conducive?”, D1 of WOF reflected that:

*Our institution can do a lot of things if it wants to make the work environment conducive for all its constituents particularly aspiring to be leaders and managers. For example, it can be attempted to provide instructors, particularly women with the residence houses, avail transportation, offices, well-equipped libraries, toilets, lounges, neat classrooms with quality boards, chairs, tables, fans, lights, and so on.*

D2 on the other hand noted:

*There should be positive and sound communication and positive motivation styles (both intrinsic and extrinsic), and accessing promotion to the staff, particularly for women.*

D3 of the same group responded as follows:

*By restructuring and revisiting different allowances for leaders and managers, and the other staff so that women can be attracted and love the leadership and management profession.*

One can deduce from the above quotations that there should be a revisiting of the policies related to allowances, salaries and other benefits for the potential leaders so as to make the leadership profession attractive for all. The issues of communication and motivation is something that should be given emphasis by the HEIs and the government. Along with this, to attract more women to the leadership profession, all the relevant facilities, especially the basic necessities like residences, transportation, proper offices, lounges, bathrooms and so on (cf. 2.3.3, 2.3.4 & 3.8).

Asked “what would your institution do to make the leadership and management environment conducive for women?” D7 of the group DF reflected as follows:

*The institution should first convince women on their ability in leadership and management – if they are well educated and trained like their male counterparts, they can manage and lead higher education institutions.*

D8 (the second member of DF group) also responded:

*Management of HEIs have to use different communication and motivation skills, and all the materials and facilities available for the women along with reducing course load to make them attracted by the profession.*

D9 stated that:

*The university management should improve the salary and allowance related benefits and facilitate the promotion through amending the senate regulations about promotion of women and related criteria.*

It can be inferred from the above quotations that if the HEIs were able to educate and train women, they could be capacitated and then motivated to assume senior leadership positions in the HEIs. Thus, it is important to first convince women about their talent to

lead and manage so as to develop confidence. Moreover, it is evident that the salary, position allowances and other promotion access should be available for the aspiring women (cf. 2.3.1, 2.3.4 & 3.8).

When asked the question “what would your institution do to make the leadership or management environment conducive for women?”, D10 of HF stated:

*The institution through the provision of different types and levels of capacity-building leadership and management training, reducing the workload of teaching, and treating women positively.*

D11 responded as follows:

*Encouraging women to love the profession together with improving the leadership position allowances, incentives and salaries for women can make the leadership and management environment conducive for women.*

D12 noted:

*Capacity-building for women on leadership management should be the must. Because, without competence of leadership and management it is unlikely to lead or manage such complex institution.*

It can be deduced that women should be treated positively and be provided with capacity-building training. Moreover, it is learnt that to empower women, their teaching workload should be reduced to develop their competence in leadership and management (cf. 2.3.2, 2.3.4 & 3.8).

With regard to the question “what would your institution do to make the leadership and management environment conducive for women?”, one of the members of WAF group, D4, stated that:

*Along with availing the necessary materials and facilities, the institution, together with the government, the society and its partners (both inside and outside) should first work on the capacity training on leadership and management of women.*

D5 added to the ideas of his colleague above as follows:

*...the level of management and leadership requires high level of competency, confidence, commitment, and communication skills as well.*

D6 supported the ideas of his colleagues by saying:

*Without high level of competency, confidence, commitment, communication and relevant materials nothing can make the leadership and management environment of such HEI conducive.*

It can be inferred from the above quotations that HEIs should make the leadership and management environment conducive and attractive for the aspiring women leaders and managers. They stressed capacity training along with the provision of the necessary materials and facilities for the women. In light of this, they believed in competency of women or whosoever to lead and manage such higher level of position and institution. They also raised the issue of reducing the teaching course loads at the institutions for women taking into account the house chores that women also had to do. In other words, this indicated that there was no conducive work environment for leadership and management for the aspiring women in the HEIs of south Ethiopia, which could be said one of the causes for their underrepresentation (cf. 3.8).

#### 5.4.2.7 Discussion of C1g: Programmes that should be followed in the HEIs to involve women in senior leadership positions

The participants noted different suggestions regarding the programmes that should be entailed as follows:

First, VP1 noted:

*Programmes like gender departments, women forum offices, women leadership programmes should be opened. In addition to that every agendum and plan of institutions should incorporate the empowering issues of women in senior leadership positions.*

Furthermore, he added:

*Empowering women would bring about a number of changes for women, institutions, and the large society. For instance, the empowered women can be models for thousands of female student and teacher populations, the degree of corruption may be reduced, resources could be efficiently utilised, democratic leadership style can be practised, commitment for leadership may be improved, the untapped natural talents and experiences of women since their childhood may be exploited. (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).*

Concurring with the above idea, VP4 noted:

*There should be women leadership and gender departments, or such departments should be strengthened. Different plans and programmes of the university should incorporate the agenda of empowering women. There should be capacity-building training for many aspiring potential women leaders in short term, midterm and long term. There should be clear appointment criteria for women competitors with male counterparts at lower, middle, and higher levels of leadership to make them practice leadership for the future senior and top leadership positions.*

It is urged in the above quotation that this university should have gender-based departments that should incorporate different plans and programmes of training of different types and levels to empower women. There should have been clear appointment and selection criteria for the leadership of aspiring women at different levels (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

Asked for the existence of plans to improve the potential of aspiring women leaders, VP3 stated that:

*It was not incorporated as agenda in different meetings and conferences and even different plans of the university though there are currently insignificant attempts.*

In connection with the above question, VP2 also responded as follows:

*Senate legislation amending regarding women research fund, publication, specialisation, qualification, and prioritisation of women in the areas where there was a gap regarding women leaders should be done. Furthermore, women leadership departments should be opened to increase specialised women for potential leadership of the HEIs.*

He further stated that:

*A quota system should be applied for women until their number in leadership is relatively balanced with that of male leaders together with side by side capacity-building for women on leadership and management. Again, scholarship for women on leadership with some of the partner countries like People's Republic of China should be provided and incorporated in both the plans and programmes of the university.*

It is clearly seen in the above quotation that there is a gap in the existing legislation regarding women empowerment and based on that amendment of legislation has already been started. Accordingly, it was learnt that prior to this study there was no special research fund for women, and no attention was given for the publication of journal articles, qualification and specialisation of women in leadership. In this regard, there was a gap. In order to bridge such problems, in this university, it was stated that there should be quota systems for the aspiring women leaders, capacity-building training including provision of scholarship for women in leadership and management in partner countries like China where there are institutions offering such women leadership (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

Asked whether his institution had plans to improve women potential for leadership, VP2 further said that:

*Recently taking into account the importance of women in leadership and management positions in the top, we started amending the existing senate legislation that was too tight for women promotion. We have also started awareness and capacity-building short-term training for women academia. We*

*have plans to award the women principal investigators the research budget without competition with others. We have a plan to sponsor women who have got scholarship abroad by their own effort.*

It can be inferred from the above extract that amending the old senate rules that were too tight not to empower women has been started in such a university. Others stressed that their research funds awarded the women principal investigators without any process and procedure. They also stated that they had plans to sponsor women academics who privately received scholarships by searching. It can be seen that universities started opening gender offices and gender departments to accept women for leadership training. It was also stressed that different plans and programmes of the HEIs should incorporate women empowerment agenda (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

For the same question above, one of the members of WOF group, D1, reflected that:

*Leadership capacity-building training along with awareness creation about the diversity of leadership in light of gender should be provided particularly for women academia in a regular basis.*

Another member of the same group, D2, reflected as follows:

*.... scholarship particularly on women leadership both internally and abroad for women should be provided.*

The third member of this group, D3, supported the ideas of his colleagues by saying:

*Along with other things, different programmes like gender departments should be opened to provide different leadership capacity-building training.*

It can be inferred from the above descriptions that, in order to empower and capacitate the leadership aspiring women, opening different gender-based programmes and departments is very important (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).



In connection with the above question, member of DF group, D7 responded that:

*The institution should have programmes to appoint women teaching staff first at lower level of management to make them exercise leadership from the scratch.*

Another member of the same group, D8, responded as follows:

*There should be plans to expose women to research work and make them publish articles in the reputable journals worldwide to make them fulfil the criteria for promotion to the senior leadership positions.*

D9 of the same group added that:

*Higher Education Institutions have to make women get experiences through exposing them to different institutions to get experiences for later leadership and management.*

According to the above quotations, women should get exposure to the external world so as to exercise leadership and management. Moreover, different bodies and institutions are urged to develop systems for women to exercise leadership from the lower level to prepare them for later senior level leadership (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

For the same question, D10, member of the HF group, reflected that:

*Programmes like capacity-building and awareness creation regarding the importance of gender-diversified leadership should be applied.*

D11 of the same group noted that:

*Both institutions and government should have different programmes where women take part and actively participate in leadership and management or prepare themselves for the potential senior leadership.*

D12 of the same group said that he shared the ideas of his colleagues:

*There should be different leadership capacity-building training and programmes for women. In this regard, institutions and the government should use different strategies and even revise the existing policy.*

In accordance with all the above quotations, it is possible to deduce that the government, together with the HEIs should provide women with different leadership capacity-building training through opening different programmes and designing different strategies (cf. 3.8).

Another member of the WAF group, D4, reflected as follows:

*Capacity-building and awareness creation programmes should continuously be provided to the existing women in the system.*

D6 added to the ideas of other colleagues as follows:

*It should be made to bring more women academics to the system of the university in collaboration with the large society, the government and women themselves.*

It can be seen from the above quotations of all the group members regarding the plans HEIs have to empower women in senior leadership positions that there were attempts of some HEIs to fill the gaps. One can learn from these quotations that there were gaps with all the HEIs though there had been a good start with some universities (cf. 2.3.3).

#### 5.4.2.8 Discussion of C1h: Values of the presence of women in the top leadership positions of the HEI

If women are brought to the top leadership positions in the HEIs, they have a lot of advantages according to VP1. He raised the following advantages:

*If women are elevated to the senior or top leadership positions in the HEIs, they can easily and closely play the instructional leadership role – can supervise the learning of particularly female students; can solve the teaching – learning problems of female students without denying to support male students. Institutions can also provide different support for female teaching staff to improve the teaching of*

*teachers. Moreover, they can attract more female students being models for the future leadership and commitment in their areas of specialisation.*

In the above quotation, it can be seen that the elevation of women to senior leadership positions may result in better instructional leadership on the part of women and better performance of students in general and female students and staff in particular. Moreover, their elevation may attract more aspiring women to the leadership positions and profession (cf. 2.3.4, 3.7 & 3.8).

VP4 also reflected that women's inclusion in top management can add a number of values as follows:

*The level of quality decision-making can be increased with more women leaders in senior leadership positions. More new ideas can be generated. Corruption may be decreased. They can be models and exemplary for many aspiring women leaders. Resources can be efficiently utilised. Productivity and quality services for the customers may be improved.*

One can infer from the above quotation that there could have been a quality decision in this university had there been inclusion of female leaders in the top positions because of more new and different ideas by women. The degree of corruption would have been decreased women are said to be better than men in corruption fighting. Scarce resources would have been efficiently utilised because women are said to be better in efficient utilisation of resources than men. Moreover, customers would have received quality services and the productivity of the institution would have been increased because of the presence of women leaders in the top leadership and management positions (cf. 3.5, 3.6, & 3.7).

Asked about the value of women involvement in senior leadership positions of his institution, VP3 added that:

*In the institutions where there are almost half female students' population and teaching staff as well (though insignificant in number), the presence of women leaders at top position has a number of advantages. For instance, the presence of women presidents or vice-presidents or deans may improve the performance of both female instructors and female students as well. Literature and experience show that women can better play the instructional leadership role than men. They are better in instructional supervision, highly committed to achieving something.*

VP2 stated his answer to the question as follows:

*The involvement of women in senior leadership position may result in high performance of students and instructors, high productivity of institutions, close supervision, low corruption and so on.*

The ideas behind the above quotations are that women involvement in the top leadership and management positions would have many benefits. According to the participants, it may improve the performance of female students, instructors, and the institutions as well. Instructional leadership may be improved. Quality decisions could be made. More new ideas can be generated about leadership and management. Moreover, women may be good models for other aspiring women (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

For the question “what values would the presence of women in management positions add for the success of your institution?”, D1 of WOF group responded:

*Their inclusion may add commitment on the part of male leaders and staff as well. It may increase productivity, quality of performance.*

D2 noted:

*Inclusion of women in management of the HEIs may add trust – the foundation of leadership and may increase the performance of students.*

D3, the third member of the group, added that:

*...wise use of resources may be ensured through the involvement of women in senior leadership of the HEIs along with other qualities.*

From the above description it could be learnt that the inclusion of women in such leadership position may increase even the commitment of male leaders and the entire staff because of the higher nature of commitment on the part of women leaders. Productivity, performance and trust are the likely improving aspects with the inclusion of women leaders (cf. 3.2, 3.5, and 3.6).

For the same question, D7 of DF responded as follows:

*More commitment of the entire staff because of the women's commitment may be ensured if women are included in the senior positions of leadership and management of the HEIs, resources may utilised efficiency, punctuality and cooperation among teams may be promoted.*

D8 suggested:

*There may be more trust and integrity among members of the staff if more women are involved in senior leadership positions, the organisations are likely to increase productivity.*

D9 responded as follows:

*High performance on the part of all the constituents of the organisation are likely values if women assume the top leadership positions in our institution.*

Lessons could be drawn from the above quotations that high contributions are likely to be made if women assume senior leadership positions, more trust among the staff may prevail, more productivity may be registered in the institutions, and more commitment of the staff because of the high commitment of women can prevail (cf. 3.5 & 3.6).

D10 of HF gave his answer for the same question as:

*Accountability for what are done, responsibility, integrity, transparency, and commitment among all the leaders and the whole staff may be improved if more women are included in senior leadership and management positions in the HEIs.*

D11 was another member of the same group noted:

*... low degree of corruption, more efficiency, participatory decision-making, high productivity in the organisation, more degree of consistency in what is promised and done, smooth communication and so on may be improved with the inclusion of more women in senior leadership positions.*

D12 was the third member of the same group and suggested the following:

*With the inclusion of more women in senior leadership positions of HEIs, low aggression, high achievement and so on are the likely values that could be added.*

All in all, what is learnt from the above quotations is that empowering women in senior leadership position may result in values such as more commitment, low aggression, high achievement, low corruption, more participation of all the staff in decision-making, more consistency between what leaders do and say may be observed. Moreover, sound communication among the entire community may appear in the institutions (cf. 3.5 & 3.6).

In connection with the above question, D4 of the group WAF reflected that:

*Women would be able to discharge their effort and leadership talents that they are known for. For instance, women are said and seen to be efficient in resource management.*

D5 of the same group added:

*Women are highly committed in the issue that they believed in, more democratic compared with their men counterparts, better instructional leaders compared with men. Therefore, organisations may benefit if women are included in such senior leadership positions.*

D6 of the same group put forward his suggestions as follows:

*Women are known for that they are emotionally matured, more trusted and so on. Therefore, their presence may make the institution more productive than ever – diversified leadership in gender is greater than only male leadership.*

From the above quotations, it could be learnt that the presence of women in the senior leadership positions have a number of values. It may enable women to discharge their leadership talent for which they are known. It may make the institution more democratic. More accountability, responsibility, commitment, transparency, trust, efficiency, smooth communication, low aggression, and more consistency are the likely values that can come with the empowerment of women in the senior leadership positions in the HEIs. This concurs with what scholars say (cf. 3.2, 3.5, and 3.6).

#### 5.4.2.9 Discussion of C1i: Attitude of the community towards the leadership of women in HEIs

With regard to the attitude of the university community towards women leadership and management, VP1 said that there were a number of indicators that the community was still negative – they had no confidence in the leadership of women. Moreover, regarding the ways that may enhance the quality of institutions, VP1 responded:

*Empowerment of women is likely in the HEIs only if the community get rid of the negative attitude they developed towards women and if women are committed to working hard as men or even harder than male counterparts. This can be ensured if the government, institutions and the large society work positively towards supporting them.*

What one can deduce from the above quotation is that the negative attitude towards women leadership is still prevalent in the community. Thus, in order to get rid of this attitude of the community, women themselves, more than anyone else, should work hard or harder than anybody else. In order to realise this, the government, together with the HEIs and the larger society should play a supportive vital role (cf. 2.3 & 3.8).

Again, VP4 noted that:

*Attitude of the community and large society is still negative towards women and their leadership and management.*

The above quotation confirmed that the negative attitude of the society is still prevalent. This, therefore, is what should be avoided by the society if women are to be empowered (cf. 2.3.2 & 3.8).

VP3 also responded to the question related with the attitude of the community towards women leadership. He mentioned that:

*The attitudes of both women and men is negative towards women leadership.*

He further pointed out that:

*Even some women themselves are not interested in the leadership of women including the highly educated women – ‘Queen Bee Syndrome’.*

In connection with the above question, VP2 stated:

*The community has still no confidence in the leadership and management of women.*

From all the above descriptions, it could be learnt that the attitude of the society is still negative towards women empowerment. With regard to the attitude of the community towards the leadership and management of women staff, all three members D1, D2, and D3 similarly responded as, “the attitude of both the educated and uneducated, and the attitude of even some women is negative towards other women leadership and management.”



D7 of group DF noted:

*... the community is still not interested in the leadership and management of the women including the top-level managers and leaders..*

D8 of the same group also noted:

*... male top managers are not willing to delegate authority and responsibility for their women officials under them.*

Another member of the same group, D9, added to the above ideas as:

*Knowingly or unknowingly, people have no confidence in the knowledge and skill of women, to what extent they are educated.*

It is seen that still there is a negative attitude towards leadership of women on the part of the HEI community, and top male leaders are not still willing to delegate power to women so that women can exercise leadership.

In connection with the above, D10 of HF noted that:

*Let alone the leadership of women in such a highest and most complex organisation and level, people have no confidence in the leadership and management of women at the lower positions of other sectors which are less complex than others. This is believed by both women and men.*

D11 added to the above as follows:

*... many male leaders and managers of the institution are not willing to delegate authority for women staff.*

D12 noted:

*Women get no opportunity to exercise leadership and management.*

According to the above quotations, women have no opportunities to exercise leadership. People generally still have no confidence in women leadership (cf. 2.3.4).

In this connection, the D4 of WAF group also said:

*The absence of women in the leadership and management positions of different levels is the reflection of the negative attitudes of both men and women towards the leadership and management of women.*

D5 of the same group also noted:

*Women themselves are reluctant to apply for the leadership positions may be because of the lack of confidence in them that attributed to their early socialisation into the negative attitude of the society. On the other hand, male leaders are reluctant to delegate authority to women staff because of lack of confidence in them.*

D6 of the same group added his suggestion in the following words:

*When women succeed in something, they say 'oh, there is a male behind this success', when women fail, they discourage by using different expressions. So, this all could be said indicative of the negative attitude of the community towards women leadership and management.*

From all the above descriptions, it could be deduced that the society (both educated and uneducated, women and men, leaders and followers) are negative towards women empowerment, particularly in the higher positions of institutions like the HEIs. This concurs with what Lumby (2009) notes as "In educational leadership, being female is seen by colleagues, students, children, and parents as well, as stigma, an attribute that is deeply discrediting". Grogan (2010:131) also supports this idea saying, "There are always factions in organisations. Some support women and others oppose them. Men always belittle, disapprove, want to see women fail before they start" (cf. 2.3.2 & 3.4).

#### 5.4.2.10 Discussion of C1j: How socialisation affects the aspiring women leaders

VP1 responded to the question, “In what ways would socialisation affect women managers?” as follows:

*What affects the aspiring women more than the external influences is their socialisation into the negative attitude of the society. Even if some women are educated and highly trained, however, they still have less confidence in themselves – they become submissive and extremely shy. They do not dare to ask questions and forward comments and suggestions in public (regarding women-related issues). They keep silent even when men are speaking against them in public in fear of the likely negative consequences.*

It can be inferred from the above quotation that socialisation into the negative attitude of the society has affected women a lot. Women are immersed in this socialisation and developed inferiority complex even if they are highly educated and qualified to leadership positions of different levels (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).

The group coded VP4 as well, stressed that women still developed inferiority complex and did not free themselves. He expressed this as follows:

*Women still do not dare to ask questions even related with their rights in public. They prefer to keep silent when other women supporting men raise questions related with the rights of women. They don't dare to forward suggestions and comments on women relevant issues in different conferences and meetings. So, this all is indicative of the socialisation of women in the negative attitudes of the society that resulted in shyness and timidity of women that contributed to the underrepresentation of women.*

The above quotation tells one that because of the ever-existed socialisation, women even do not dare to ask questions related with their rights. They do not forward suggestions and comments because of developing the inferiority complex. They developed shyness and timidity. Their underrepresentation in this university is partly because of this (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).

In connection with the above question, the participants coded VP2 and VP3 mentioned unanimously and uniformly in their respective universities as “*socialisation has affected women who are aspiring for leadership more here in the university*”. Therefore, women still lack confidence. They were submissive and shy when asked to give comments or suggestions on their own issues (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).

From the above quotations it can be inferred that women are still legally illiterate about their rights. Women are socialised into the negative attitude of the society, and as a result they develop inferiority complex (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).

For the same question, D1 of WOF noted that:

*It is not only the socialisation of women into the ever-existed negative attitude that heavily hurt their moral to lead or manage or to aspire for those professions, but also those male leaders who have already assumed the leadership positions – that have already socialised into the negative attitude and developed themselves negative attitude towards women, still hurt the moral of the leadership and management aspiring women academia.*

D2 of the same group raised relatively the same reason for the above question as follows:

*Our society always have negative perception towards women. Even educated women too are negative towards women leadership this perhaps may attribute to their socialisation into negative perception of their parents and society since their childhood.*

D3 on its part strengthened these two ideas saying that:

*Negative attitude of the society and illogical acceptance and socialisation of women into this evil attitude highly affected women in their present and future career.*

One can deduce from the above quotations that women in the Ethiopian HEIs in general and in this university in particular double-damage themselves and others and have done so in the past and present (cf. 2.3).

In connection with the above question, D7 of DF put his suggestion as:

*The ever-existed negative attitude of the society towards women education and women empowerment as well still made women submissive in the society. Women are not active participants even if they are highly educated and trained and even joined big institutions like this.*

D8 of the group noted:

*Women get ashamed to ask even their own problems related questions and to comment on the matters related with their rights in public.*

D9 suggested that:

*Women become hopeless whenever some issues go wrong. They get reluctant about their own institutional rights – they always seem legally illiterate in public.*

All the quotations show above that women lack patience, not strong enough to exhaustively use their constitutional rights. Moreover, even if they get chance to lead they get reluctant to continue (cf. 2.3.1).

D10 of HF reflected on the above question as follows:

*Women still seem to have been victims of socialisation in to the negative and wrong attitudes of the society. They look still more introverts than being extroverts.*

D11's perception was:

*Women still get submissive and shy to ask for their rights in public. They do not want even to use the constitutional rights of the country.*

D12 also reflected on the question as follows:

*Women sometimes seem to be illiterates about different women supportive policies of the land including constitutional laws.*

The above quotations show that women do not exhaustively know different policies of the country that support women empowerment. Partly because of their socialisation by society, women develop negative attitudes and tend to become excessively submissive (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).

D4 of WAF said:

*Women of our institution still seem to have developed inferiority complex. This could be seen during different times. Even the highly educated women are not seen to have actively participated in questions related with their rights in the institution.*

D5 of the same group also responded:

*There is no female activist in the institution. There are no women who assumed top leadership positions.*

D6 noted:

*... no single woman was seen raising the 'why are we absent' question. So, this indicates that socialisation affected women seriously.*

From all the above quotations, it could be learnt that the deep-rooted socialisation of women into negative attitude of the society has still a serious impact on the part of women aspiring to leadership and it had impact on them after some women assumed the leadership positions. Women still seem to have developed inferiority complex, lacked confidence to defend their rights and became reluctant to assume the leadership and management positions (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).

#### 5.4.2.11 Discussion of C1k: What promotion of women to the senior leadership position means to society

In response to the meaning of the empowerment of women in the senior leadership positions of HEIs for the society, VP1 said as follows:

*Women are half the population of the country and the HEIs as well. On the other hand, women are mothers, sisters, wives – family. Women are talented and fit for management and leadership if they get access to lead and manage. Moreover, women have rights to be empowered. Women have their unique talents for leadership and management. Therefore, this means many things to the society. Furthermore, they can be models for thousands of female students of the HEIs, schools, and even those of women who are outside the education system.*

He further responded as follows:

*They can be models for thousands and millions of the aspiring women leaders in education system and other sectors in the country. Besides, women can benefit economically, politically, academically, socially and mentally as well that may result in the benefit of the large society – women are part of the large society.*

One can infer from the above quotations is that if women assume the top leadership positions, they may be models for the other aspiring women. If they get access, they are talented to lead not less than their male counterparts. Their number and their more attachment to children and the staff make their empowerment rightful (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

In connection with the above question, VP4 noted:

*Society is the sum total of its male and female population. Therefore, if women benefit from their empowerment, it is the society that benefits from it, because they are mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives as well.*

From the above quotation one can deduce that if women are empowered, it is the entire society that is empowered; if women are benefited it is the entire society that benefit – there are so many advantages with the empowering of women (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

Asked about what the promotion of women in the HEIs mean to the large society, VP2 suggested:

*Since women are part of the society – they come from the society and go back to the society, their benefit may mean the benefit of others. Moreover, their empowerment may awaken thousands of women both inside and outside the HEIs. They may be models.*

The above quotation shows that along with the advantages of empowering women, their empowerment may awaken many other women.

VP3 noted:

*Women's empowerment directly or indirectly may bring about change for many people in many aspects.*

The above quotation indicates that women empowerment may mean many things for many people.

All the quotations above show that promotion of women means many things for the society. For instance, the empowerment of women in senior leadership positions may awaken thousands of women for their rights and benefits. They may be models for the society, and benefited in many ways (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

With regard to the above question, "What would the promotion of women to the leadership position mean to the large society?", D1 of WOF noted:

*As the large society is the sum total of women and men population, the promotion of women in the HEIs would mean the empowerment or promotion of the large society in part.*

D2 noted:

*All what women benefit is all that men benefit.*



D3 added to the ideas of his colleagues as follows:

*Empowering women can be considered as empowering family and the large society.*

All the quotations above indicated that in this university it is believed that women are half of the population. Therefore, empowering women may mean empowering the large society. The benefit for women may translate into the benefit for men (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

D7 of DF noted that:

*It is obvious in south Ethiopia in particular and Ethiopia in general that because of the long-lived patriarchal system and domination of men, women have been oppressed more and are being oppressed today in many aspects.*

D8 put forward his suggestion as follows:

*... regardless of the levels and degrees except the sound policy of the country on paper, women are underrepresented in senior leadership and management positions.*

D9, the third member, strengthened the above ideas as follows:

*women empowerment means women freedom and the freedom of the large society and country as well, because the country or the institutions are the sum total of women and men.*

All the three quotations above show that women may obtain freedom through their empowerment, which in turn would bring about freedom for half of society. They also indicated that though there are sound policies on paper, there is still mismatch between the policies and their implementation on the ground regarding women empowerment. Still there is oppression of women in this public university because of the old patriarchal system (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

In connection with the above question, D10 of HF added that:

*The large society may feel as justice is done because historically women were ignored to assume the leadership position regardless of the levels. This could attract and awaken tens of thousands of women both inside the HEI and outside it.*

D11 put forward his suggestions this way:

*Economically, the family of those women who assume such positions may benefit a lot. Again, politically and socially all women of the society may be respected.*

D12 also noted that:

*Along with the benefits mentioned by colleagues above, the voices of other women in the large society may be easily heard by others.*

From all the above descriptions, it can be deduced that if women were empowered in such senior positions in such public university, voices of many other women might easily be heard. They may benefit economically, politically and socially if they assume such senior leadership positions. Moreover, the larger society, seeing the empowerment of historically oppressed groups, may consider this as justice being done (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

For the same question, D4 of WAF replied:

*Women empowerment means the emancipation of the ever oppressed half population of the society.*

D5, another member of the same group, added to the above ideas as follows:

*Women empowerment means making justice to the entire society, not only to women, because women are part and parcel of the whole society.*

D6 noted that he shared the above ideas, saying:

*If women get free and are empowered, in practice, it is the entire people that is empowered. This may indicate that justice is prevailing.*

All in all, lessons drawn from the above quotations are that society may see the empowerment of women as if justice is done, freedom prevailed, women are emancipated, equality is witnessed, and respect is given to women. The empowerment of women may mean to the entire society in general and women population in particular an end to the long-lived oppression against women and the disappearance of male domination or the implementation of equality between men and women (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

5.4.2.13 Discussion of C11: What should be done to make women interested in the leadership of HEI.

With regard to “what activities and strategies should be made to attract women to the top leadership positions of HEIs?” VP1 responded as follows:

*First of all, the pool of teaching staff of women should be full, if not adequate. Next, advocacy work should be strengthened both outside the HEIs and inside the HEIs about the importance of women leaders. Next, capacity-building training should be continuously provided for women. Authorities and responsibilities should be delegated by the top leaders for female instructors to make them practise leadership and management before assuming the positions of leadership.*

He further noted that:

*Furthermore, women should be appointed as leaders at lower-level positions before assuming the top or senior leadership and management positions as heads of departments, coordinators, officers, chairwomen, secretaries of committees and so on. Incentives for the leadership positions should also be improved like leadership position allowances, salaries, residence houses, mobile cards, special offices, refreshments and so on.*

From the above two quotations, one can draw lessons that lower-level educational institutions such as schools should provide leadership exercising opportunities to female students who are potential future senior leaders through appointing them in different curricular and co-curricular clubs and committees as chairperson, secretary and member. Moreover, the pool of teaching staff that are potentially women leaders should be include female instructors (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

Asked the same question, VP2 suggested the following:

*HEIs, together with the government should first of all make the work environment (both psychological and physical) conducive availing sound policies, training, improving different position allowances, treating women positively, supporting them with pieces of advices and materials and so on.*

As noted above there should be good salaries, allowances, empowerment policies, positive treatment, counselling services for women and so on to make the leadership and management environment conducive for the aspiring women to make them want to join the profession (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.2).

VP3 reflected on the above question in the following manner:

*Work environment for leadership and management should be attractive through different mechanisms. HEIs are expected to avail all the necessary materials and facilities for leadership and all the aspiring leaders like internet access, develop reward system for motivation and encouraging particularly the aspiring women, should improve the health service condition for the aspiring women, avail transportation service, communication, office delivery, reducing workload, allowing adequate vacation time, allowing reasonable maternal leave time, libraries, laboratories, day care service, special recreation centres like indoor games, lounges, toilets and so on.*

As mentioned above, U3 is not attractive to the aspiring women. There is a scarcity of leadership and management facilities and materials. There is a scarcity of internet services, no reward and motivation systems for the aspiring women, no sound

communication among the staff, no sound transportation system, no sound basic necessities like residence house, not enough vacation time, no adequate libraries and laboratories and so on. Therefore, these should be available for the aspiring women leaders at this university (cf. 2.3.4, 3.8 & 6.5.2).

VP4 stated the following:

*Reducing workload, improving the negative attitude of their male counterparts and the society, accessing opportunities for leadership training, improving incentives related with the position held, improving cooperation and respect between women and men and encouraging and awarding women for their performance would increase their interest.*

A lesson drawn from the above quotation is that in this public university, female academics are overloaded in teaching that they have no time to think about and prepare themselves for leadership and management positions of HEIs; there are still negative attitudes towards female leadership that should be improved; there are insignificant incentives; there are few training opportunities for the aspiring female leaders; and there is a lack of cooperation among and between men and women that would encourage women to improve (cf. 2.3.4, 3.8 & 6.5.2).

Put simply, from all the above quotations, the suggested strategies may improve the empowerment of women in the senior leadership positions. Hence, it may increase the number of women leaders and managers if the workload of women academics at workplace were reduced. Reducing the negative attitude of the society against women; improving cooperation among all the constituents in the institution; accessing capacity-building training for women; motivating women through awarding; creating conducive leadership and management environment for the leadership and management aspiring women; and availing the necessary facilities and materials for women to make them want to enter the leadership and management profession are useful strategies suggested by the participants (cf. 2.3.4, 3.8 & 6.5.2).

On the same question, D1 of WOF reflected that:

*Women should first be made interested internally by the profession itself. Then the institution together with the government should provide all the necessary training and materials to women who aspire to be leaders.*

D2 added to the above ideas thus:

*The government, together with the HEIs should make different allowances and even salary attractive at this level and should revise the policy regarding this.*

D3 added,

*The workload should be minimised for women taking into account that of the homework for women.*

All the three quotations above suggest that the workload of women academic staff should be minimised to provide them with more time to prepare themselves for leadership and management of higher education and higher positions. Furthermore, women should be encouraged to take an interest in the leadership profession through different strategies such as provision of training and materials relevant to leadership and management disciplines, and through making salaries and other leadership and management position allowances for female leaders attractive with special incentives (cf. 2.3.1, 2.3.4 & 6.5.2).

In connection with the above question, D7 of DF, reflected that:

*There should be leadership and management courses from the lower level of schools up to tertiary levels, if not, should be incorporated in the curriculum of some subjects starting from grade 1.*

D8 noted:

*Since leadership/or management is a little bit broader concept and profession that comprises a number of activities within it, all the salary and position allowances and professional fees should be more attractive for women.*

D9 stated the following:

*Work environment for leadership and management should be conducive for women and men as well.*

All the three quotations above tell us that the leadership work environment for women should be conducive and attractive. Furthermore, it was urged that there should be leadership and management courses either in an integrated way or separately starting from the lower levels of the education system (cf. 2.3.4 & 3.8).

For the same question, D10 of HF reflected that:

*Telling them about the model and exemplary female leaders and adventures they did throughout the globe may make our women.*

D11 noted:

*Educating and training women about leadership and management since their childhood should be the strategies both in short term and long terms. Doing so it is likely to decrease the level of negative attitude about the nature of leadership and management among the aspiring women leaders.*

D12, strengthening the above two ideas added the following ideas:

*Availing more facilities and materials related with leadership and management disciplines for women and making the leadership environment more attractive including salary and other benefits may be the right strategy.*

All in all, what the group members stated is that provision of relevant leadership and management materials and facilities is very important. Furthermore, provision of leadership and management capacity-building training is very important for the leadership and management aspiring women starting from the lower level of education system. Thus, it was believed that doing so would make it possible to increase the positive attitude of the society towards women leadership (cf. 2.3.4, 3.8 & 6.5.2).

In answer to the above question, D4 of WAF group noted that:

*The leadership and management work environment should be conducive and attractive for women.*

D5 and D6 of the same group added their ideas as follows:

*All the necessary materials and facilities should be available. Moreover, salaries and other benefits for leaders at such a position should be attractive.*

One can deduce from the above extracts that there should be attractive salaries and other additional benefits for the aspiring women leaders. They suggested that capacity-building training and telling women about the importance of leadership and about role model female leaders across the world is important to attract more women to the leadership and management profession of such positions and to make them want to enter the profession is also essential according to the quotations above. It can also be concluded that there should be leadership and management courses starting from the lower-level schools; if not, then some content on leadership and management should be incorporated into subjects taken at university to make students, particularly female students, grasp the ideas about leadership and management from the very beginning (cf. 2.3.4, 3.8 & 6.5.2).

5.4.2.14 Discussion of C1m: What are expected of the society to promote women to the senior leadership positions in the HEI

VP1 responded to the question “what is expected of the society to promote women to the leadership of higher education?” as follows:

*First of all, the society should know that women are part and parcel of the society – society is incomplete without women. Next, they have to know that in any aspects women are needed like men counterparts except their biological and phenotypic differences. Therefore, since management and /or leadership are more of the academic and cognitive skills and knowledge, society should give equal attention and weight for their sons and daughters at any level and any sectors.*

He further noted:



*They have to avoid stereotypic views, discrimination, and negative attitudes for both their sons and daughters. They have to develop confidence in women or their daughters, mothers and wives as well. They have to think that women mean many things like men. In this regard, society should start treating their daughters equally with their sons since their childhood; they have to strive towards the education and empowerment taking into account that ignoring women means ignoring part of the society or ignoring part of your own body.*

From the quotations above, one could infer that because of the importance of both women and men, from the very beginning, society should give emphasis to the development and growth of both their sons and daughters. Discrimination and negative attitudes of the society against women and girls should be avoided at all costs. Confidence should be developed in the talents and leadership capacity of women along with other qualities. This should be realised in U1 to empower women (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.3).

On the same question, VP4 raised the following suggestions:

*Society particularly scholars should have positive attitudes towards empowering women in the top positions of HEIs. Moreover, they have to teach society to avoid hostility against women and to teach it that women are part of us in many aspects. Besides, schools of the lower levels (bases for the potential leaders) should appoint female students as chairpersons and secretaries as well in different clubs (co-curricular activities) and make members of different committees in their respective schools to make them practice leadership and decision-making for the potential leadership in the HEIs. Moreover, society should eliminate the ever-existed discrimination between male and female children starting from their home and avoid the ever women-discouraging expressions deep-rooted in the society.*

It can also be seen in the above quotation that there is still a problem of a negative attitude on the part of the society regarding women empowerment. Hence, it is urged that scholars and society at large should develop positive attitudes towards women empowerment and their talents regarding leadership and management. Moreover, it is discussed that female students who are the potential leaders should get the opportunity to exercise leadership

and management starting from the lower levels (schools) via appointing as secretaries and chairs of different clubs and committees (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.3).

VP3 noted that:

*The large society, taking into account that both boys and girls are equally gifts of God and equally important, should treat them equally since their childhood. Moreover, they have to give attention for their school education taking into consideration that the lower-level education is base for the higher education for both the girls and boys. Then they have to support their daughters with all the necessary support until they can stand on their own feet. Above all, they have to eliminate all types of discrimination against women and teach their daughters about their equality with their sons both at home and outside. Furthermore, they have to be on the side of women and girls towards empowerment.*

The above quotation stressed that society should treat both women and men equally since their childhood and give equal attention for the education and training of both girls and boys starting from their lower school levels. Elimination of any form of discrimination against women should be discussed. Thus, the society is urged to improve such problems in this university (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.3).

According to VP2, society should stop the negative attitudes they have developed towards women wrongly and unreasonably and provide the necessary support for female children from their childhood.

It can be concluded from all the above descriptions and quotations that society should be cooperative in empowering women in treating both women and men equally through giving equal attention to both their sons and daughters from their childhood by avoiding discrimination. Moreover, society should provide their daughters with the necessary support from the very beginning regarding their schools and colleges. Furthermore, society and the schools should make female students and women exercise leadership and management through the appointments as committee members, secretaries, and chairpersons of clubs as well to make them exercise leadership from the very beginning. Furthermore, it was suggested by the participants that society should get rid of stereotypic

views and discrimination and treat their daughters and sons equally from the very beginning (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.3).

For the same question, D1 of WOF group responded as follows:

*The society should develop the trend of equally treating their daughters and sons since their childhood.*

D2 added his ideas to the above ideas:

*The society have to access education and training for both their children. Then, they should educate both their boys and girls providing all the necessary support and advising.*

D3 said:

*The society should take into account that both their sons and daughters can be everything if they are educated about different areas of specialisation including higher education leadership and management.*

It is inferred from the above quotation that society should support their sons and daughters to think about leadership and management since their childhood along with accessing education for both. Equal treatment of girls and boys has also been raised as area of attention by the society (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.3).

In connection with the above question, D7 of DF added his suggestions thus:

*The society should support their daughters materially, morally, and mentally through the provision of necessary materials. More than this, they have to develop the system of equal treatment for both their daughters and sons since their childhood.*

D8 noted:

*They also have to have plan for consulting and advising their children at home.*

D9, the third member of the same group, put forward the same suggestion, saying:

*The large society should provide both boys and girls with the same support since their childhood and should create awareness for both girls and boys regarding the importance of both women and men.*

According to the above quotations, society should support the education and training of boys and girls. In order to do this, the society should have a plan of home-based consultation and develop a well-coordinated system of support. If all the above gaps are bridged, the probability of seeing more women in senior leadership positions in this university is believed to be reality (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.3).

In connection with the above question, D4 of WAF added that:

*The large society should treat their daughters and sons equally since their childhood. They have to support the education of daughters and sons fairly. They have to encourage both their sons and daughters equally to be high potential professionals including leaders and managers.*

D5 noted:

*They have to avoid stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination against female and women.*

D6 also responded:

*They have to avoid the 'bone-breaking' and discouraging proverbs and idiomatic expressions that highly discouraging women and women both psychologically and morally not to assume the leadership and management positions in the future.*

One would argue from the above quotation that society should not use the 'bone-breaking' negative and discouraging proverbs and stereotypical views against women. It should support women, avoid discrimination and prejudice, and support girls materially, morally, and mentally from early childhood (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.3).

5.4.2.15 Discussion of C1n: What the government should do to promote women to the senior leadership positions in the HEI.

“In what ways should the government help women assume the senior leadership positions in the HEIs?” was another question for VP1. In this regard, he responded as follows:

*It is not denied that the Federal Government has been discharging its efforts to bring women up to top leadership positions in general and educational leadership positions in particular including the senior leadership positions of HEIs. However, still there are a number of gaps. There is a mismatch between the policies and implementations. Furthermore, there is weak monitoring and evaluation system of HEIs and the government.*

He further noted:

*Though it is obvious that currently HEIs are autonomous and there is an academic freedom, however, the owner of these institutions – the government and MOSHE – should have made HEIs responsible for their failure of attempt for empowering women that was stipulated both in the constitution of the country and higher education proclamation of 2009. Moreover, the government should access leadership and management training programmes for female academia together with the HEIs and its partners abroad.*

One could argue that previously the Federal Government did not take responsibility for empowering women except for the formulation of the existing policy – there was a poor monitoring and evaluation system regarding whether HEIs empowered women or not. Again, it was learnt that leadership and management capacity-building training for women was inadequate or non-existent. Though there have been attempts by the government to do so, there is still a mismatch between the gender policy and action on the ground (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

VP4 noted what the government should do to empower women as follows:

*The government should give quotas for women academia for leadership positions in the HEIs. Furthermore, the government should make leaders of the HEIs accountable for the failure of empowering women teaching staff. Furthermore, the government should revise the women policy of the country from time to time and provide different leadership and management capacity training for women.*

The above quotation shows that in order to bridge the historical gap regarding women empowerment in senior leadership positions, the government should use the quota system to bring more women to the front leadership positions. It also urged that the government should make those who have already assumed senior leadership positions in the HEIs (men or women) accountable for the underrepresentation of women in such positions via the evaluation and monitoring system. Furthermore, it urged the government to revise the existing gender related policies (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

For the question “how should the government help women to make them assume the leadership positions in the HEIs?”, VP2 urged the government as follows:

*In the first place, the federal government and MOSHE should always evaluate the existing policies and regulations, including the higher education proclamations about women empowerment and make the necessary amendments (if any), and the Federal Government shouldn't govern the HEIs by the remote control though HEIs are autonomous nowadays. There should be a system of continuous monitoring and evaluation to make the HEIs accountable for empowering women or not. Moreover, the HEIs, together with their partners in the country and abroad should avail leadership and management capacity-building training for the aspiring women academia.*

It is also possible to infer from the above quotation that the existing policies of gender, together with the higher education proclamation should be regularly amended and evaluated for their effectiveness. It was emphasised that there a close monitoring and evaluation system regarding the degree of women empowerment should be developed.

More leadership and management capacity-building training for women was also stressed on (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

VP3 also urged the government to control and strictly monitor and evaluate what is going on in HEIs regarding women empowerment and urged it to amend different rules and regulations related to women empowerment. He also put forward his suggestions for the government to do the same with lower schools and even with the non-government organisations and partners (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

From all their quotations and descriptions, it can be seen that the government has attempted to design policies on women and take a number of affirmative actions. However, a number of gaps in the empowerment of women were observed. In this regard, the participants urged that the government should revisit the existing policies and should bridge the problems related with the implementation of the policies related with women. Furthermore, the government is urged to strengthen the system of monitoring and evaluating of the HEIs that it owns regarding women empowerment. It has to make universities accountable for some issues although the HEIs are currently autonomous. Furthermore, it was raised that government should capacitate women aspiring to leadership through the provision of different types of scholarship both inside and outside the country. It is also put forward as suggestion for the government to apply quota systems for women for the leadership positions in such institutions and levels of leadership (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

With regard to the question “In what ways should the government help women to make them assume the leadership positions in the HEIs?”, a member coded D1 of WOF noted that:

*The government should have controlling system to check whether its policies are being implemented or not.*

D2 added to the ideas of his colleague above thus:

*The government should provide different supports for HEIs to empower women.*

D3 strengthened the above ideas saying that:

*Since the HEIs belong primarily to the government, it should pave the way for empowering women.*

It can be inferred from the above quotations that the Federal Government has got emphasis for empowering women more than anybody else via availing the relevant resources and strengthening the monitoring and controlling system (3.8 & 6.5.4).

In connection with the above question, a member coded D7 of DF put forward suggestions this way:

*The government should evaluate its policy implementation including women empowerment.*

D8, another member of the same group, noted:

*The government should revise its policies and regulations regarding the assignment and appointment and employment policies of the HEIs.*

D9 added:

*The government should avail the training opportunities for women academia.*

As for previous suggestions, the above participants also raised that facilities and training should be available for the aspiring women along with the provision of different relevant leadership and management capacity-building training (3.8 & 6.5.4).

In connection with the above question, group member coded D10 of HF responded as follows:

*The government should improve the appointment and promotion criteria for the aspiring women leaders and managers of the HEI.*

D11, another member of the same group noted:

*The government should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system of the HEIs regarding women empowerment.*



D12 said:

*The government should make HEIs safe leadership environment for women.*

It could also be learnt from the above quotations that the leadership and management environment for women should be conducive for the aspiring women by the government. Moreover, the government was urged to improve the selection and recruitment or assignment and appointment criteria for the aspiring women leaders together with strengthening monitoring and evaluation process (3.8 & 6.5.4).

Another group member coded D4 of WAF noted:

*HEIs are owned and governed by the government. Hence, there should be developed a workable policies and strategies to put them on the ground regarding the empowerment of women.*

D5 responded as follows:

*The government with its partners should avail different levels and type of leadership capacity-building training continuously for the aspiring women academia.*

D6 strengthened the ideas of his colleagues in this manner:

*The government should make the leadership and management environment attractive for the aspiring women leaders through availing different training opportunities.*

Just like some of the previous suggestions, the above quotations too, discussed that in this university the government should make the leadership and management environment conducive for the aspiring women via different training together with its partners on continuous basis. Moreover, it is suggested that there should be workable policies and strategies to implement these policies (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

All in all, these group members urged the government to provide women with different leadership and management capacity-building training in the country and abroad.

Furthermore, they urged the government to amend and improve the appointment and promotion criteria of the senate legislation, recruitment and selection criteria of the HEIs and revisit the HEIs proclamation. They urged the federal government and MOSHE like other participants to strengthen the close monitoring and evaluation system of the HEIs. In other words, the HEIs and the Federal Government were urged to bridge the gap in this regard (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

5.4.2.16 Discussion of C1o: what kind of training programmes should be there to promote women to the senior leadership positions in the HEI

With regard to the training programmes for women in the HEIs, VP1 raised the following issues:

*No one can boldly say that currently there are strong programmes related with empowering women. However, more recently women are made to compete among themselves for research fund to make them win the research award.*

According to VP1, there are no strong gender-based programmes to capacitate women for potential leadership and management. However, recently women academia were made to have competition among themselves for research grant though they were not competent enough. Yet, it is a good beginning (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.2).

VP2, another participant, noted:

*Women should conduct research, publish in the reputable journals, fulfil the criteria for application of senior leadership and management positions and win the game.*

It can be deduced from the above extract that interest in leading without having the leadership knowledge and skill may be meaningless and fruitless. What one can learn from this is that women should conduct research and publish articles in reputable journal. As this is a prerequisite for promotion and empowerment at universities for both women and men (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

In answer to the same question, VP3 raised his suggestion:

*Awareness creation programmes, especially for women should be continually held in the university to promote women leadership.*

Awareness creation was emphasised for empowering women in U3 according to the above quotation (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

VP4 stated:

*Women should be exposed to different capacity-building programmes. Therefore, HEIs should have different gender-based programmes and plans. Though recently there are good beginnings at some universities, however, they are not strong, and they are passive.*

According to this quotation, women should get exposure to different capacity-building leadership and management training programmes. Therefore, this urges the HEIs more to increase gender-based programmes both in quantity and quality (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

In connection with the above question, D1 of WOF responded as follows:

*Though there are recently awareness creation meetings and conferences, the programmes to improve specifically the potentials of women is not clear yet.*

D2 responded as follows:

*There is no clear programme related with empowering women in my institution. However, it is good if different women capacity-building departments and programmes.*

D3 gave his suggestion thus:

*There should be capacity-building training on leadership and management both abroad and in the country for the aspiring women leaders.*

The above three extracts stressed on the capacity-building training on leadership and management both in the country and abroad. Moreover, it is stressed that there should

be gender-based departments and programmes. There should be clear awareness creation programmes (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

D7 of DF responded to the above question as follows:

*Yes! Recently the university appointed two women vice-presidents, opened gender offices and some department heads.*

Supporting the above idea, D8 mentioned:

*The number of members of administrative board was increased. The appointment of two vice-presidents is a commendable action.*

Agreeing with the above two ideas, D9 of the same group added:

*The new top managers are promising to increase the number of women senior leaders like deans, directors, presidents and vice-presidents.*

It can be inferred from the above quotations that there is hope by the new managers and leaders in U4 regarding women empowerment in senior positions. Though is still insignificant, however, assigning two women vice-presidents and increasing the number of women on the administrative board is a promising start in U4 (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

With regard to the question “does your institution have plans of improving potential of women leadership?”. One of the members of HF group, D10, responded as follows:

*There is no significant and commendable plan designed yet to promote women to leadership and management positions. There is only one dean of graduate school and very few department heads.*

Concurring with the above ideas, D11 stated:

*There is no attempt made and no issue were raised as agenda in different senate meetings about empowering women.*

Agreeing with the above ideas, D12 stated that:

*Empowering women is not incorporated in different plans of the university.*

One can deduce from the above three quotations that there is no gender agendum raised in different meetings and conferences. Women empowerment has not been incorporated in the plans of this university. The presence of only one female dean is commendable for the failure of planning women empowerment (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

In connection with the above question, D4 of WAF group responded as follows:

*Yes. Recently we have started amending the legislation particularly regarding women research fund, article publication, scholarship and promotion aspects.*

D5 noted:

*If women and men academia present research titles for fund awarding, we started passing the women principal investigator without competition. Furthermore, our university started sponsoring the study of women abroad if they get scholarship abroad by their own effort.*

Concurring with the ideas of his colleagues, D6 stated his ideas as follows:

*The university started employing the graduate female students with higher performance and zero service to create more potential women leaders.*

It could be seen from the above quotations that in all the public universities understudy, there were no strong programmes of different kinds to promote women to the senior leadership positions in the HEIs though there observed some beginnings of amending the existing legislations regarding women empowerment (Wachamo University). Furthermore, the universities in the study did not incorporate empowering women in their agendas of their meetings. This indicated that there were no strong programmes to empower women academia and indicates that institutions and the government should create different programmes that may add something to empower women academia in the senior leadership and management positions in HEIs (cf. 3.8 & 6.5.4).

5.4.2.17 Discussion of C1p: How the elevation of women to the HEI leadership encourages female students and women.

To this question, VP3 responded as follows:

*By its very nature, female to female approach is more likely than female to male approach. Therefore, if more women assume the senior or top leadership or management positions, either more women may draw to those presidents and attempt to be or may aspire to be leaders getting more experience from those women.*

The above excerpt shows that female leaders need to mentor female students more than male leaders. The existence of more female leaders may bring more potential women leaders to this institution. Furthermore, their presence may attract more aspiring women to the system and increase and improve the performance of students, teaching staff and the institution as well (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

VP4 elaborated on the above idea when he stated that:

*Those women leaders may go nearer to those female students and provide the necessary supports, may consult them, and may improve the performance of thousands of female students. Or models for thousands of female students both inside and outside the university.*

One can deduce from the above excerpt that the presence of female leaders in senior leadership positions may have a positive effect and impact on the performance of students along with that they can be role models for the other leadership and management aspiring women (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

VP1 concurring with VP4 and VP3, stated:

*Since women are said to be better instructional leaders, their empowerment may improve both the learning of all students in general and female students in particular, and also the female teaching staff as well.*

As can be seen from the above excerpt, women empowerment in senior leadership positions in HEIs is important both for the female staff and students as well (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

In agreement with the above, VP2 noted:

*Female students and instructors as well may feel free to approach female leaders more than they approach male leaders. More than that, the presence of such women leaders may energise and add morale on the part of those female students who are aspiring to leaders or known professionals in the future.*

From the above descriptions, one can deduce that elevation of women to the senior leadership and management positions may make female students feel free to approach female leaders easier than that of male leaders. The presence of women leaders may even energise and boost the morale of female students. It is also seen in the quotations that the greater number of female leaders, the greater the likelihood of approaching them and the more experienced the female students may be because of their exposure to the mentorship of those women leaders (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

With regard to the question “how will the elevation of women in the HEIs management encourage female students and women?”, D1 of WOF noted that:

*If female students see more women presidents, vice-presidents, deans, and directors, their morale may be boosted.*

D2 noted that:

*Female students at university may get more services, and they may be models for thousands of women.*

D3 mentioned:

*Female students at the lower levels outside and inside the university may consider women who already assumed leadership positions as models.*

From the above responses, one can deduce that female staff and students of HEIs as well may benefit a lot if women are elevated to the senior positions of leadership in the HEIs. Female students at schools may consider women leaders in the senior positions in the HEIs as models, and this may boost the morale of the aspiring women wherever they are (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

For the same question above, D7, a member of the DF group, responded as follows:

*Never in the history of women in the country and South Ethiopian public universities, until recently, women assumed the higher leadership positions in the higher education system. This resulted in lack of model women and became one of the many reasons for the absence of women in leadership positions for many women.*

D8 noted:

*If women come to the senior leadership positions in the higher education, this can boost the morale of many women and female students at many levels of the education system and increase the performance of many female students and teaching staffs as well.*

D9 concurred with the above ideas as follows:

*Women who assume the top positions can be good models for the leadership aspiring female students.*

From the responses given above, one can deduce that good women, who are exemplary in every aspect, and interested in the leadership profession can be role models for other women aspiring to leadership positions (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

In connection with the above question, D10 of HF group responded as follows:

*Their elevation may improve the performance of both female students and women staff, because women leaders have the better trend of close supervision and the ability to play more instructional supervision and instructional leadership.*



D11 of the same group noted that:

*Women leaders can be good models for female students and women both outside and inside the university.*

In connection with the above question, D12 also raised his ideas this way:

*Female students may benefit from the knowledge of close supervision of women if women assume top leadership positions.*

From all the above quotations, one can conclude that female students and staff may benefit a lot from empowering women in the senior leadership positions since women are known for being better instructional supervisors and leaders than their male counterparts (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

For the same question above, D4 of WAF group responded as follows:

*Empowerment of women in such positions may elevate the morale of both the female students and female staff of the university. Women, who have been oppressed for years in the past by the existing patriarchal system may feel freedom when they see that their equals holding offices at such higher positions of higher education.*

D5 noted:

*Women academic staff and female students may benefit a lot from the instructional leadership talents of the women academic leaders and managers which they are known for.*

D6 added:

*They may get the teaching-learning environment conducive because of the close approach and effort women leaders make.*

It can be seen in the above quotations that the elevation of women to the top positions may boost the morale of female students and women academia as well. Female students and staff may find the freedom to make others hear their voices. Female students and

instructors may benefit from the instructional leadership quality of women top leaders. Female students' and female instructors' morale and performance may be improved and the women aspiring to leadership and management may get experience and energy as well from those women who assumed leadership (cf. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7).

5.4.2.18 Discussion of C1q: Challenges that women activists should focus on to empower women.

With regard to what women activists should focus on to emancipate women, VP1 reflected that:

*Women activists should first be able to emancipate women from the ever-existed inferiority complex. If women are not for themselves, no one can be for them. They consider themselves as if they are inferior to their male counterparts. So, first women activists should fight against such bad attitudes. Next, they have to create awareness on the part of both women and the society about women's rights. Then they have to fight any odds against women based on different policies, laws, and conventions of the UN and countries through different electronic media and other means and strategy. Furthermore, they have to get at institutions like HEIs a place and stage to have a say regularly about the rights of women.*

It can be deduced from the above quote that women should act against the ongoing inferiority complex that might have developed due to socialisation in negative attitudes of the society. Furthermore, women activists are urged to create awareness for other women and others on the importance of women leadership. It is also observed that women activists should opportunities to teach others about the quality and importance of women in senior leadership and management positions (cf. 2.3).

For the same question, VP4 said that:

*Let alone women activists, even men activists are rare or null in Ethiopia in general and in south Ethiopia in particular because of the infant democracy and low civilisation of the country. Therefore, activism is not such an easy task for women in both the region and the country where there is diversity in many forms and where*

*male domination is deep-rooted since long ago. If women attempt to act activism, they are easily rejected by the community or even jailed to have violated the existing law or committing unethical acts against the government.*

It was stressed that activism is not an easy task for women in countries like Ethiopia because of its infant democratic civilisation. However, women and men who have feminist attitudes together with the government, institutions, and society should make the work environment conducive for women for this purpose (cf. 2.3).

VP3 explained further that:

*Women activists should start awareness creation at schools. They have to work together with different institutions to teach female students and employees as well about power and its importance, leadership and management as well. Moreover, they have to be able to provide different leadership and management related training for female students and teachers or instructors as well to exercise leadership and management from the outset through girls club, women forum, gender club, 'women parliament', and so on.*

The above quotation shows that women activism should start at the base, namely at school level. Female students should practice activism, leadership and management training and practices at the lower basis. In order to effect this, female students should be involved in different school clubs, committees, and other co-curricular activities as chairpersons, secretaries, and members under the close control of female teachers and heads (cf. 2.3).

VP2 put forward his suggestions as follows:

*If women are not for themselves, no one can be for them. So, being together and strengthening their unity, they have to struggle strongly to emancipate themselves through the formation of their own forums, networks, and the use of different media without violating the welfare of others, and without compromising the existing rules, laws, and conventions of the countries, regions, and the world.*

It can be deduced that, more than ever, women need strong unity, togetherness, leadership practice during their time at schools through different clubs and committees as members, secretaries, chairpersons and other form of headship. Women activists were also urged to focus on leadership and management and other capacity-building training for female students and women with different forms of livelihood and training on the importance of skills of leadership and management. Besides, taking into account that the number of female activists is insignificant, and activism is not an easy task, the few existing female activists are urged to be more competent, tactful, knowledgeable, skillful, and train other female activists on how to carry out their activism (cf. 2.3).

For the same question, a D1 of WOF noted that:

*Equality, equity, and diversity should be areas of focus for women activists. Even though there are a number of policies, rules, directives, and institutional regulations, there is unfairness, injustice, and violation of even the existing laws of the country, regions and the globe as well. Therefore, women activists, more than ever, should strive towards the prevalence of the aforementioned aspects.*

D2 noted:

*Women activists shouldn't be hopeless, and together with other gender-sensitive women and men they have to struggle to emancipate women including empowering themselves in the higher education institutions as well.*

D3, another member of the same group raised his ideas thus:

*No one can emancipate anyone if one fails to support himself or herself. Therefore, women should strive for empowering themselves.*

It is reasonable to infer from the above quotations that it is only women that can emancipate themselves more than anybody else. Women should not be hopeless in the struggle that they are making towards equity, equality and leadership diversity. They have to strive towards at least to put the existing sound policies on the ground (cf. 2.3). In connection with this, D7 of DF reflected as follows:

*What affected women more not to free and emancipate themselves are factors related with themselves than the external factors. Many women are not cooperative to other women. They put themselves under the shoes of men. They do not have confidence on themselves.*

D8 added his ideas as follows:

*Women easily get hopeless and easily defeated by men. Therefore, women activists should work more on the awareness creation of women themselves. Moreover, they have to give emphasis for the implementation of those sound policies of the country, legislations of the university, and the formulation of other sound policies for women.*

D9 noted:

*Women have to appeal for the government and other law-enforcing bodies of the world in case the laws and women empowerment policies are violated through the use of different media. For instance, they apply to human rights watch, ombudsman, parliament, ministry of women, youth and children and so on.*

From the above quotations, one can deduce that women should work hard with different media regarding their rights. Even when their rights are violated in the country, they have to inform the concerned body instantly. They have to use their rights exhaustively but systematically. It is also learnt what affected women more are factors related with women themselves. Thus, they have to be committed to emancipate themselves more than anybody else (cf. 2.3).

In connection with the above question, D10 of HF noted that:

*Women should focus on the still dominant socio-cultural barriers, women-related barriers, institutional barriers, economic and political-legal barriers.*

D11 noted:

*Though their degree varies, different problems are prevalent in the society, in the institution, and within women themselves.*

The third member, D12, noted:

*Women should frequently get capacitated through exposing themselves to different training.*

One can infer from the above quotations that more than anybody else women should expose themselves to the external world to capacitate themselves and to be seen in the leadership and management sphere. Through their activism, they have to attempt to break the continuous cycle of socio-cultural, political, institutional, economic, and self-related barriers (cf. 2.3).

D4 of WAF, provided his suggestions thus:

*Taking into account that the leadership of both women and men are important, and without hurting the morale of men counterparts, and considering that the purpose of the struggle to emancipate oneself is not to damage others, women should focus on only the gap that have been observed forever.*

D5, the second member of the same group, noted:

*For instance, they have to work on breaking the negative perception against women's inability of leadership and management – women are as able as men if they are well educated and trained or if they get exposure and opportunity for leadership training.*

D6 added to the ideas of his colleagues as follows:

*They also have to closely control the implementation of different policies and conventions on empowering women and democratic rights of women.*

All the above quotations urged women activists to give emphasis to areas like equality, equity, diversity, self-related factors, institutional barriers, socio-cultural factors like socialisation and stereotypes, awareness creation, policy implementation, leadership and management capacity training, economic and political-legal problems. However, the statements could show that there were no women activists who played the role to empower women in such areas (cf. 2.3).

#### 5.4.2.19 Discussion of C1r: Plans of HEIs to empower women in top leadership Positions.

VP1 was asked whether his institution had plans to improve the potential of women for the aspiring women staff, he responded as follows:

*In fact, there are more recently started initiatives. Women teaching staff were made to compete among themselves for research grant and made to compete with their male counterparts. This was done so to make them win the research grant or award, conduct research, publish articles, and fulfil the criteria for competition for senior leadership positions and capacitate themselves for everything including leadership and management. However, I do not think this is enough and satisfied women academics. Moreover, recently retaining and employing outstanding undergraduate female students in each department was started.*

The above quotation shows that in the past there was a wide gap in U1 regarding empowering women – there was no system of promotion was developed regarding women. However, this beginning is promising and need to be maintained and sustained (cf. 2.3.4).

VP2 noted as follows:

*Gender offices were opened to play their roles at least to balance women and men aspects in the university including women empowerment. There is a start of networking women among themselves and organising women forum. However, despite these all attempts women are still underrepresented not only in the senior leadership positions, but also in the lower leadership positions like departments. Truly speaking, empowering women was rarely part of our agenda and it was rarely part of our different plans though recently there were some good beginnings.*

The existence of women's forums, networking, and the opening of gender offices in U2 is a promising start though there were no such things in the past and were not even part of any agenda of the university. Thus, it is recommended by the researcher to be strengthened more than ever (cf. 2.3.4).

In connection with the above question, VP3 added the following suggestions:

*Currently, except few good initial steps like employing some graduate students with higher performances and awarding women with research budget based on the 'women-only competition', there is no special plan to promote only women.*

It was stressed in the above quotation that there should have been a plan to specially promote women to bridge the historical gap regarding women empowerment though currently there was a good attempt in this university (cf. 2.3.4).

VP4 reflected as follows:

*I believe that it is better if we incorporate the issue of empowering women in senior leadership positions in our strategic and even everyday plans for our common good in the future.*

It is stressed in the above quotation that incorporating the issue of women empowerment in all types of plans of the university is essential in this university.

It can be deduced from the above quotations that all the public universities of south Ethiopia under study had no strong or deep-rooted programmes and plans for empowering women in the senior leadership positions in their respective universities. However, there observed and mentioned some good beginnings with some universities regarding placing women in the vice-president positions (cf. 2.3.4).

To the question “Does your institution have plans of improving the potential of women in leadership?”, D1 of WOF replied as follows:

*Though there are recently awareness creation meeting and conferences about the empowerment of women, the plan to improve specifically the potentials of women is yet not clear.*



D2 noted:

*There are no plans at the college levels regarding the empowerment of women.*

D3 also noted:

*Women empowerment was not part of the agenda of colleges and departments in our university.*

All the above quotations supported the fact that U1 had failed to make women empowerment an integral part of its agenda and plans though recently there were some awareness creation conferences and meeting on women empowerment (cf. 2.3.4).

For the same question, D7 of DF noted that:

*Yes! Recently the university [U3] appointed two women vice-presidents, opened gender offices and some department heads.*

D8 stated:

*The number of women members of administrative boards was increased.*

D9 also added to the ideas of other colleagues:

*The new top managers are promising to increase the number of women senior leaders like deans, directors, presidents and vice-presidents.*

It can be deduced from the above quotations that unlike other universities under study, U3 has relatively better commitment to empowering women in senior leadership. More women on the administrative board, the appointment of two women vice-presidents, and positive approaches of the existing male leaders are all promising at this university though there is still a gap (cf. 2.3.4).

D10 of HF group answered the above question as follows:

*There is no significant and commendable plan designed yet to promote women to leadership and management positions.*

D11 noted:

*There is only one dean of graduate school and very few number of department heads. Except these there is no attempt made and no issue were raised as agenda in different senate meetings.*

D12 also added to the above ideas thus:

*Empowering women is not incorporated in different plans of the university.*

One can deduce from the above quotations that the lack of a plan to empower women, the existence of only one female in the dean position, and only few female department heads show that there are great gaps to address regarding women empowerment in U4 (cf. 2.3.4).

Another member coded D4 of WAF group also noted that:

*Yes. Recently we have started amending the legislation particularly regarding women research fund, article publication, scholarship and promotion aspects.*

D5 noted:

*If women and men academia present research titles for fund awarding, we started passing the women principal investigator without competition. Furthermore, our university started sponsoring the study of women abroad if they get scholarship abroad by their own effort.*

D6 responded as follows:

*The university started employing the graduate female students with higher performance and zero service.*

It could be noted that one of the four universities (U3) had a relatively good beginning by amending the existing tight senate legislation that was against the promotion of women. However, there were no commendable plans to empower women in the senior leadership and management positions in their respective HEIs (cf. 2.3.4).

#### 5.4.2.20 Discussion of C1s: Improving potential of women towards leadership and management

VP1 put forward his ideas towards the strategy in improving the quality of women in his institution this way:

*Women themselves should first avoid the socialisation problem into the society's negative attitude.*

According to this quotation, women should take the blame for their underrepresentation in the senior leadership position in this university. They might have been immersed in the negative attitudes of the society against them. So, women are expected to strive for their freedom and empowerment (cf. 6.5).

VP2 said:

*Women have to work day and night to be more competent than men, if not, to be equal with their male counterparts.*

The above quotation stressed the leadership and management knowledge and skills of women. To assume such senior leadership and management positions in complex organisations, women are urged to develop competence through working hard.

VP3 also added his ideas:

*Women can realise this only through hard work, because simply having a wish may not make anybody leader or manager – competency matters. Government in collaboration with HEIs should provide them with different leadership and management capacity-building training.*

According to the above opinion, there should be a match between interest, knowledge and skill to achieve something. Women, like men, should be knowledgeable and skillful – qualified and specialised in leadership and management in order to assume top positions in the public universities like this (cf. 6.5.1).

In connection with the above question, VP4 responded as follows:

*It is obvious that women should be competent enough to assume the leadership and management positions taking into account that management and leadership are both science and art, and that women should work harder than men to compensate the historical gap that made them lag behind their male brothers, and women should avoid their socialisation into negative attitude of the society and start believing in their own by developing confidence more than ever.*

The above quotation urged that women should work hard, should not be hopeless, avoid their socialisation into the negative attitude of the society, and develop confidence through overcoming the inferiority complex they have developed (cf. 6.5.1).

Furthermore, all the twelve members of the four FGD concurred with the ideas of the four vice-presidents saying:

*Women, more than anybody else, should get ready to emancipate and empower themselves through hard work and getting rid of their ever-existent socialisation into the negative attitude of the society towards women education and women leadership. (cf. 6.5.1).*

All in all, one could learn from the above perceptions of all the participants, if women aspire to assume leadership position, they should avoid their socialisation into the negative attitudes of society, and they are expected to work hard or harder than their male counterparts to become competent to be appointed to the senior leadership positions. Furthermore, the government was urged to provide women with capacity-building training (cf. 6.5.1).

## **5.5 DISCUSSION OF CAUSATIVE FACTORS FOR THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN VIA OBSERVATION**

While observing during his stay for weeks in the four public universities of south Ethiopia, the researcher has observed the following issues that related to the material inputs, actions, and attitudes related with the problem under study. In this regard, the researcher could observe the following aspects.

- Insignificant numbers of women academic staff were observed – that is the pool for the potential senior leadership positions was not extensive at any of the universities;
- There were no adequate or relevant leadership reference materials for the aspiring women leaders in the libraries;
- There was an insufficient number of libraries for both female and male academic staffs at all four of the public universities;
- There were no amenities set up for women in the HEIs to attract women to the leadership positions;
- There were no strong women forums at any of the universities;
- There was no positive and strong interaction between male and female academic staff;
- It was observed that female teaching staff did not participate actively in different meetings and conferences in all four universities. This was learnt from eight consecutive meetings held during the stay of the researcher in all the four universities under study;
- The level of women's participation in asking discussions was very weak;
- No women were observed using the reference materials, and only few female teachers were observed in only one of the libraries of four universities;
- In all of the universities the gender office was newly established and poorly organised with an insignificant number of specialised individuals;
- It was not possible to find out whether there was male violence or not;
- It was also observed that lack of women leaders had an impact on the number of female students who use libraries – only a few female students were observed to be consulting reference materials at libraries with all the four universities;
- The participation of women in different clubs and committees was insignificant to develop the potential leaders and to create a pool of potential leaders;
- There was insufficient infrastructure for women teaching staff such as adequate toilets, restrooms or and lounges;
- No research materials were observed at the libraries that might attract women researchers;

- Women were observed to lack proficiency in the English language which is medium of instruction;
- In some cases, women lacked physical fitness because of the biological factors;
- There was a high workload for female academic staff;
- No residential facilities were provided for women.

### **5.5.1 Presentation and Discussion of the Data Related With Measures Undertaken (Category 2)**

According to all the four vice-presidents, and four focus groups of four public HEIs, there have been a number of policies, rules and regulations including legislation in the country to empower women. For instance, there is a women's policy under the office of prime minister of the country, and different affirmative-action interventions have been made to provide access to higher education for women by reducing the requirements for entrance to HEIs compared to male students to widen the pool of potential women academics. Further, some special support had been provided for female students particularly from less privileged regions and poor economic family grounds. Furthermore, there were cooperative groups for girls to improve their performance and to facilitate their graduation. All these attempts were made both implicitly and explicitly to increase the number of women academics that could be a potential pool for the aspiring women leaders (according to all the participants from the four sampled public HEIs of south Ethiopia).

Apart from the affirmative-action initiatives by the government, non-government organisations and private institutions too were asked to include the issue of empowering women into their plans. Furthermore, different advocacy programmes were set up and different women organisations were instituted at different structures and levels of organisations. It is obvious that the number of female students, female teachers, and female instructors had increased. This is the result of many schools, teachers, universities and colleges adopting the conducive and all-inclusive policy of the country, the commitment of the government, and the promulgation of different international and regional conventions and declarations aimed at improving participation of women in leadership in general and educational leadership in particular though women are still underrepresented on the ground.

All four universities had recently started employing one outstanding female graduate from each department as graduate assistants and made them continue their studies to increase the number of women in the pool of potential women leaders.

Though the majority of women academics were not competent to apply for and to compete with their male counterparts, U1 had appointed women who applied for deans' positions, but they had failed to do this in other directorate positions to encourage them and give them the necessary exposure to leadership to become role models for other women aspiring to leadership and management. Furthermore, female principal investigators were appointed at U2 although women did not want to conduct research at the same university. New policies are being designed for the women's research fund at U2 according to the vice-president for academic affairs. Though the existing legislation made it difficult to promote women, the university did this by giving equal opportunities for training for men and women.

Since 2017, the number of senate members had increased from two or three in a total of 32 at U3; and there were two to three in management councils of ten members. The university entrance requirements had been slightly reduced for female students. More advocacy programmes were run for female students. More support related to sanitation and stipends were made for women particularly from less privileged regions of the country. Though not strong, women's forums had started to strengthen the network among women academia;

Women started competing among themselves on research proposal at all universities though at some universities, on the ground, it seemed that for political correctness all competed, but none were awarded the research budget at universities like U2 and U4. Women were appointed to non-academic leadership positions of directors and the number was insignificant in all the public universities under study.

Regarding measures undertaken to empower women in leadership positions of higher education institutions in general and senior leadership positions like presidents' and deans in particular, all four vice-presidents and the deans in their focus groups put forward

their suggestions based on their insights into their institutions, the country, women themselves, and society.

In this regard, below are some of the verbatim quotes by the participants. First, VP2 gave his suggestions regarding measures undertaken by his institution, the Federal Government, women themselves, and society as follows:

*There is a mismatch between the Federal Government policies on women empowerment and what is being implemented on the ground though there have been a number of affirmative-action cases heard and heralded during different times. For instance, there have been a number of sound ideas stipulated in different laws of the country including the grand law of the country – constitutional law regarding women empowerment. However, the attempt is not null. For instance, institutionally, recently, a number of attempts have been made though no women were adequately represented in senior leadership positions in our university.*

He further noted:

*Recently, one of the high scorer female graduates in each department was made to be employed in respective departments so that make the pool for potential women leaders full. Though not qualified and competent with their counterpart men for the senior leadership positions, however, we appointed directly to the other leadership positions like CEP, IQEAD, and registrar office as well. In addition to that we directly awarded the female principal investigators whenever they presented their proposals of university research giving priority recently. Furthermore, we are amending and revising the female research issue of the senate legislation.*

From the above extracts, it can be deduced that the government had sound policies on women that had not been the case during the past regimes in the country. However, the problem was that women themselves did not use them exhaustively on one hand, and on the other hand, the government, whose responsibility was to take care of all the citizens failed to monitor and evaluate the process of empowering women in the senior leadership



and management positions of the HEIs of which they are the owners. On the other hand, the universities should appoint women staff in leadership and management positions at lower levels and directorate levels to make them learn leadership from the lower levels. It was observed that HEIs had started employing new female graduates in some departments who were found to perform better than their colleagues. Furthermore, adapting the rigid senate rules against women was a promising action and should be continued (cf. 2.3).

VP3 reflected on the above question as follows:

*For three years, our university has taken measures to increase the number of female senate and management council members from 2 to 3 in total of 32 and 2 to 3 in total of 10 respectively though these women too, played passive roles in empowering other women or regarding their responsibility and purpose towards empowering women. Currently, the two vice-presidents positions are held by women.*

He further noted that:

*Moreover, gender offices were opened which was not there before three years. Establishment of women forum and making women networked among each other and supporting them with materials and training are good beginnings though are not strong enough yet. New female entrants' entrance requirements were reduced by 0.4 for women compared to that of male students. Material support has been made for girls in our university since three years back.*

It could be inferred from the above quotation that U2 had started increasing the number of women in councils like senate and management and appointed two women to the office of the vice-presidents. They disclosed that they had started supporting female students by providing the appropriate materials and reducing their university entrance requirements. They also indicated that they had recently started women's forums and women's networking processes. Therefore, here it could be said that those of the women who assumed the leadership positions should play active roles in bringing other aspiring women to the senior leadership positions by downplaying the "queen bee" syndrome. It

is suggested that the university should strengthen and continue such promising activities (cf. 2.3).

In connection with the above idea, VP1 advised me of measures taken to empower women in senior leadership positions in the HEI in particular and leadership position in general as follows:

*Though yet women are underrepresented in senior leadership positions in our university and of course other public universities of the country as required, however, there are some measures undertaken by the Federal Government, HEIs, women themselves and the large society. In the first place, it cannot be denied that the FDRE government has stipulated in the constitution and higher education institutions proclamation as to empower women in senior leadership positions. Moreover, though not touched the ground, in any conference of MOSHE and MoE one of the agenda is about empowering women – though there is a mismatch between policy and implementation.*

He further noted that:

*Furthermore, institutionally, our university has recently started to encourage women academic staff to compete among themselves for the research award and to conduct and publish research to fulfil criteria of promotion to the rank of assistant and associate professorship which are prerequisites for empowerment of senior leadership positions of HEIs though it is obvious that currently our women academic staff are underrepresented not only in senior leadership positions but also in lower and middle leadership positions as well. Just like other public universities, our university recently started to retain one high performing female graduate in each department and send for further studies both at home universities and abroad though there are some irregularities and lack of fairness to some extent.*

Just like other participants, this participant too, acknowledged the attempts recently made by the government, women themselves, HEIs and society. In this regard, the participant stressed the stipulations regarding women empowerment issues in different laws and

policies of the country. He stated that the women empowerment agenda was incorporated in all the agendas of MOSHE though not in the HEIs' agendas. However, he stressed that there was still a mismatch between policies and their implementation on the ground. He further noted that though not strong, U1 had started supporting women to conduct research to fulfil the criteria of promotion and the requirements for high ranking positions. He further noted that U1, just like other public universities, had recently started retaining one high performing female graduate in the university in each department (cf. 2.3 & 3.8).

VP4 put forward his suggestions regarding measures undertaken to empower women as follows:

*Attempts have been made by the government. We have sound policies regarding gender equity and empowering women in all sectors in general and in education sector as well including HEIs. Our University has provided a lot of training for women teaching staff though their number is few on empowering women and other related factors for women. Currently though their number is insignificant some women were made to be heads of departments like Geography and deans like school of graduate studies recently. Special arrangements were being made for female students at libraries though not for female teachers. Female graduate students who are high scorers are made to remain as graduate assistants at each department.*

It could be understood from the above quotation that the government has taken a number of actions including policy formulation regarding women. U4 had recently provided a number of training programmes for women on issues like empowering women and related factors. They disclosed that some women had been appointed as department heads like head of the Geography Department, and the Dean of School of Graduate Studies. Special arrangements at libraries for female students were also started. Here too, the process of retaining female graduate with high scores in each department was followed (cf. 2.3 & 3.8).

With regard to measures undertaken, D1 of WOF put forward his suggestions as follows:

*Compared with the former policies of the country, historically, no one can deny the contribution of the current government regarding empowering women at different positions and sectors of the country. It empowered women up to ministerial level. For instance, a number of women happened to be ministers and state ministers as well including minister of the MoE.*

D2 noted:

*Empowering women was true in sectors and ministers as tourism and culture, minister of defence, minister of labour and social affairs, minister of women and children, minister of electric power and service and so on. Apart from this, the government had formulated policies on women affairs, and made half of the seat of parliament for women or made half of the seat parliament occupied by women and organised the women forum at the parliament as well.*

D3 responded:

*Female students were made to join higher education institutions by reducing the entrance point of university by 0.4. Not only this, but also the government created system of supporting female students with academically and financially. Female students, particularly with poor economic family background were given 200 ETB and other material supports like toilet and ordinary soaps, and sanitation materials.*

It can be seen in the above quotation that the current government has done a lot to empower women compared with the former governments of the country. On the other hand, this strengthens the reality that was mentioned by others that there is a mismatch between such sound policies and attempts of the government and implementation of them on the ground (cf. 2.3, 3.4 & 3.8).

D4 of WAF put forward the following suggestions:

*Recently, our university, particularly after the coming of the new president (who gender-sensitive and positive towards empowering women) there had been advocacy works though not on the ground yet.*

D5 noted:

*Some positions like gender offices and gender departments were recently launched. The research budget for female academic staff is on the way to be launched.*

D6 also added to the ideas of his colleagues in the following manner:

*Some of the female graduates are being retained as graduate assistants and so on to fill the gap of potential female leaders.*

One would agree with the above quotation as recently a gender office had opened and was run by female staff. Some departments were also led by female teaching staff. Furthermore, female graduates with high cumulative grade point averages were made to be employed in each department (cf. 2.3.4, 3.8 & 6.5).

D10 of HF reflected on the same question as follows:

*Though it is undeniable fact that the Federal Government and the Federal higher education Institutions have stepped forward a lot, yet HEIs are expected to go miles of distances regarding empowering women.*

D11 also noted:

*In fact, there are good beginnings regarding policy formulations related with women who historically could have faced a lot of challenges and were under the domination of men.*

D12, the third member, also responded as follows:

*Though there are attempts made to appoint few women academia in positions like departments, and though attempts were made to support female students, and good encouraging was there, yet women are underrepresented not only in top or senior leadership positions in our university but also in lower and middle levels of management.*

Though it is not denied that both the Federal Government and HEIs took some measures regarding empowering women, it is clearly mentioned that there was a big gap in empowering women in top leadership positions according to the above quotation (cf. 3.4, 3.8 & 6.5).

D7 of DF raised this slightly differently as follows:

*For three years, our university has shown progress regarding women empowerment in the senior leadership positions.*

D8 responded this way:

*Two vice-presidents are currently women – vice-president for research and community service and dean of health and medicine with the rank of vice-president are women though these women leaders played passive roles.*

D9 also noted:

*Because of lack of capacity and moral building by their presidents, other male counterparts, and the community as well, the empowered women played passive roles.*

It can be inferred from the above quotation that U3 showed some progress although not adequately represented by women senior leaders. On the other hand, it could be seen that those women who assumed such senior leadership positions could not play their roles as required to empower other women aspiring to leadership positions (cf. 2.3.1 & 2.3.4).

Moreover, measures taken to tackle the problems of women underrepresentation in senior leadership positions, the following issues were observed:

- Gender offices at different colleges and schools were observed though not well resourced with materials or skilled manpower. At the same time, those appointed as gender officers had teaching schedules. The researcher found their offices closed many times when he went to there to observe;
- Previously there were no recreation centres as informed – no quality lounges, toilets, rest rooms, office chairs and so on; however, currently there observed some signs of progress like many buildings were under construction for offices though their purposes were not clear;
- Some women were observed to attend some meetings though they were not active participants in the discussions;
- Women were observed to compete for the research award among themselves;
- It was observed that some top-level managers were providing orientation for women regarding their future lives and their career taking a lot of time;
- Though insignificant, some vice-president and director positions were observed to be occupied by women.

### **5.5.2 Presentation and Discussion of the Data Related With Challenges Encountered (Category 3)**

All four vice-presidents and the 12 deans and directors of the four public universities of south Ethiopia put forward their ideas regarding challenges encountered in HEIs, among the women themselves, society at large, and the government. Accordingly, the participants coded VP1 revealed the following challenges:

*There is lack of offices, facilities, and relevant leadership and management materials in both quality and quantity to attract the aspiring women to the leadership positions in general and senior leadership positions in particular.*

As noted in the above quotation, lack of offices, facilities, relevant leadership and management materials became serious challenges and led to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions (cf. 2.3.4).

VP2 noted:

*There is lack of women academic staff – it is possible to come to the leadership position only if the pool of women teaching staff is full; however, HEIs couldn't empower women partly along with other factors because of this.*

From the above quotation, it could be learnt that the number of women academics was insignificant. The pool of potential leaders was not very small. This was partly the reason challenge for the underrepresentation of women in U2 (cf. 2.3).

VP3 noted that:

*The deeply immersed socialisation of women into negative attitude of the society have not yet been erased from the minds of women whatever they are educated and given advocacy training by the government.*

Women's inferiority complexes may be attributed to the negative attitudes of the society and is still a major challenge in the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in U3 (cf. 2.3.2).

VP4 also stated:

*The historically old-age economic problems because of the patriarchal dominance of the system along with the increasing number of women in the country made government and institutions unable to satisfy women in all aspects.*

The ongoing economic problem and the growth in the numbers of women in the population were challenges for the government and HEIs, exacerbated by gender-based violence (cf. 2.3.5).



D1, member of WOF, noted:

*The implicit violence of male counterparts in the university has become still unreachable to get -rid-of on the part of authorities.*

D2 responded as follows:

*The negative attitude of men towards women leadership became still unavoidable both by the university community and large society.*

D3 also mentioned the following:

*The ever-changing nature of the country's policies and ideologies related with women ignored their empowerment.*

One can deduce from the above quotations that there is still both explicit and implicit violence of men against women in U3. Furthermore, the unstable and ever-changing country's political ideology did not emphasise the empowerment of women or did not give attention for the implementation of the policies on the ground (cf. 2.3.3 & 2.3.4).

D4 stated:

*Satisfying large number of women by providing training on leadership and other benefits at the same time or in short time became difficult for HEIs and the government.*

D5 also reflected the following:

*Leadership by its very nature requires competency. However, most of the women teaching staff are not well-qualified and experienced in leadership or had no exposure to leadership and management.*

D6 had this to say:

*Political instability made leadership aspiring women not to expose themselves to the external environment by moving where they want to move to.*

All the quotations above discussed that women could not expose themselves to the external environment to exercise leadership due to partly the ever-changing political ideologies of the country. Moreover, women lacked the necessary leadership and management competency because of their lack of the required qualifications and specialisation in leadership and management at this level. It became difficult to satisfy the large number of women at the same time through the provision of adequate training by the government and HEIs (cf. 2.3).

D7 added to the same question this way:

*Biological factors of women also became beyond the control of authorities that created fear for leadership profession on the part of women.*

D8 stated that:

*Failure to get male leaders who are positive towards women and women leadership also became challenge beyond the control of authorities.*

D9 mentioned this challenge:

*The mismatch between gender policy and its implementation are beyond the control of the existing government because of its long-lived nature of the problem in the country.*

It could be argued from the above quotations that biological factors on one hand created fear on the part of women to assume leadership positions. On the other hand, it was difficult to find male leaders who were positive towards the empowerment of women in senior positions. Moreover, the lack of the match between gender policy and its implementation was another challenge for both the women aspiring to leadership and HEIs that are willing to empower women (cf. 2.3).

D10 noted the challenges in his institution thus:

*The extent of the authority and responsibility bestowed upon leaders who currently assumed senior positions related with resource management for top managers also became beyond their control.*

D11 put forward the challenges in his university in these words:

*The [longstanding] and existing domination of male staff along with their implicit violence became unsolvable problem in short period of time for the top leaders of the HEIs.*

To the same question, D12 responded:

*The mismatch between affirmative-action policies and its implementation on the ground became a big challenge for the government because of its wrong strategies and negative attitudes of some women about affirmative-action.*

The aspiring women in U4 faced challenges as can be seen from the quotations. Male domination because of the ever-existed patriarchal system is still a reality here. There is still a mismatch between affirmative-action and its implementation on the ground may be because of the use of wrong strategies. There is a mismatch between the authority and the responsibility bestowed upon the male leaders by the MOSHE and the Federal government policy that requires the empowerment of women (cf. 2.3.3 2.3.4).

All in all, one can deduce from the above quotations that these four public universities share almost the same challenges.

## **5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter first discussed the response rates. Accordingly, it was learnt that all the participants for both the unstructured interview and focus group discussion participated and responded to all the 23 guide questions. This was followed by the discussion on the profiles of the participants in this study. Then, after briefly discussing the analysis process, the qualitative data was analysed for interpretation using the six steps of Creswell (2014:232) (cf. 4.10). Data collected from the vice-presidents and groups of deans and/or directors of the colleges through unstructured face-to-face interviews, FGD, and participant observation was put into three categories, analysed and interpreted.

The qualitative method employed here enabled the participants (vice-presidents and groups of college deans and/or directors) to express their views about the

underrepresentation of women in the senior leadership positions in the public HEIs of south Ethiopia.

The next chapter presents an overview of the previous chapters, a summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, contributions of the study, the strategic model derived to empower women in the senior leadership positions of HEIs, limitations of the study and the recommended areas for further research.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter dealt with the response rates, an overview of the profiles of participants, and presentation and discussion (analysis and interpretation) of qualitative data. Qualitative data obtained through unstructured face-to-face interviews, FGD with four presidents, and 12 deans and/or directors, as well as participant observation using a checklist of 18 questions were presented and discussed in three categories.

This chapter deals with an summary of the thesis (Chapters 1–5); a summary of the literature review; a summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and contributions of the study; the researcher’s model for empowering women in senior leadership positions in HEIs; limitations of the study; and suggestions for future research. A summary of the findings and conclusions were drawn with their implications based on the discussions made in the previous chapter. After the conclusions, recommendations are made to the government, women themselves, the society at large and the HEIs hoping that they will address the problem of women underrepresentation in the senior leadership and management positions of the public HEIs along with others. Next to the recommendations, contributions of the findings, limitations of the study and suggestions for the future study are presented.

#### **6.2 SUMMARY OF THE THESIS**

Chapter 1: This chapter dealt with the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, the aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, definition of key terms and assumptions of the study.

The main research question that this study sought to answer was framed as follows: “What are the factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in the senior leadership positions in the public universities of south Ethiopia?”

The sub-questions were as follows:

- What are the causes of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of HEIs in South Ethiopia?
- What measures do the institutions and government take to tackle the underrepresentation of women in leadership of HEIs in South Ethiopia?
- What challenges do HEIs, the government, women, and the society face while trying to solve the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions?
- How do women deal with their underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs?
- How can the problem of women underrepresentation in senior leadership positions in HEIs of south Ethiopia be tackled?

In line with the above questions, five specific objectives were formulated. To address these objectives, two groups of participants were identified: vice-presidents and deans and/or directors of colleges were drawn from public universities of south Ethiopia. In choosing research participants, a purposive sampling technique was used. The three data categories were independently analysed, and a thematic analysis was employed.

Chapter 2 presented a feminist theory as a framework that anchors the study. Different branches and types of feminist theories such as African feminism, black feminism, liberal feminism, and radical feminism along with other supportive theories were discussed in detail. The contribution of the feminist theory to the empowerment of women in HEIs was also discussed in detail.

Chapter 3: This chapter reviewed relevant scholarly literature and the feminist movement and practices from different countries. The status of women representation causes of women underrepresentation, the challenges they face, and the measures undertaken in four sub-Saharan African countries – Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa – were assessed exhaustively, and many lessons were drawn. This was done by exploring the following themes among others: women and leadership, women and educational leadership, overview of women leadership in HEIs of sub-Saharan Africa, women and

men leadership qualities, and benefits of women leadership and diversity (in gender) in higher education.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, research paradigms, philosophical assumptions, a qualitative methodology and a case study design relevant to the study were explained. Deans/or directors and vice-presidents of the seven public universities of south Ethiopia were used as the target population and primary sources of data.

Four out of these seven universities were selected using a homogenous purposive sampling technique because of their experiences, comprehensiveness, more population and a distinct patriarchal system in their organisation and operations. Accordingly, data was collected from four vice-presidents and 12 deans, who participated voluntarily in the study. Two associate deans substituted two principal deans (by delegation) for personal reasons.

Chapter 5: This chapter presented, analysed qualitative data, and interpreted the findings followed by the discussion.

### **6.3 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW**

Feminist theory as a framework of the study was employed in this study. It was used as the first literature part and the base for the study. Different branches and types of feminist theories such as African feminism, black feminism, liberal feminism, and radical feminism along with other supportive theories were discussed in detail. Furthermore, the contribution of this theory to the empowerment of women in the HEIs was also discussed in detail. It was thoroughly discussed that different branches of feminism has a lot of contributions for empowering women as to different scholars such as Lorber (2009:9) (cf. 2.2).

Related and relevant literature of different authors to the study, countries and time were reviewed in Chapter 3. The status of women's representation in leadership, causes for women underrepresentation, challenges they faced, measures undertaken and so on in four sub-Saharan African countries – Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa – and their experiences were assessed exhaustively (cf. 3.4). This was through the lens or

topics like women and educational leadership (cf. 3.3), women and men leadership qualities (cf. 3.5), overview of women leadership in HEIs of sub-Saharan Africa (cf. 3.6), benefits of women leadership and diversity (in gender) in higher education, women supportive styles and approaches of leadership (cf 3.7), and worldwide strategies, conventions and declarations, and strategies these HEIs used regarding women education and empowerment, were exhaustively reviewed (cf. 3.8).

## **6.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

This section summarises the major qualitative findings from the interviews with four vice-presidents and the four focus groups made up of 12 deans and directors from four public HEIs in South Ethiopia. The findings below are based on the main and sub-research questions:

### **6.4.1. Summary of Findings Related to the Main Research Question**

What are the factors that contributed to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs of south Ethiopia?

Findings from the literature review, interview with four vice-presidents, discussion of four focus groups, and the researcher's observation in four public universities of south Ethiopia confirmed that women's personal reasons, political-legal factors, institutional barriers, socio-cultural factors and economic problems were attributes for the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in the public universities of south Ethiopia (cf. 2.3).

### **6.4.2 Summary of Findings Related to Causes (Sub-question 1)**

6.4.2.1 Reasons for underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs

The findings show that the current FDRE has instituted a number of affirmative programmes to improve access of girls and women to education. However, harsh economic conditions, negative attitudes of society towards female education and leadership, the ever-changing negative ideologies of the country against women,



institutional barriers, and women's lack of fitness for leadership and management constrain women from progressing in their careers. It was further noted that a patriarchal system and economic laws, women's illiteracy and ignorance about the existing pro-women laws and policies were serious problems and causes of women's underrepresentation in senior leadership and management positions in public HEIs of south Ethiopia. This is found to be in line with Shah and Shah's (2012:37) observation that, "there are some broadly shared factors for the underrepresentation of women in leadership like public versus domestic attitude of the society, gender-power relations, role stereotyping." Again Bunyi (2003:10) added, "The low participation of women in the HEIs in Africa is attributed to many socio-cultural, economic, and gender-blind institutional structures that has currently got attention of the Ethiopian government" (cf. 3.4. & 5.4.2).

It is also understood that women's socialisation into negative attitudes by society since their childhood seems to have made them develop an inferiority complex and not to aspire to top positions of leadership and management even if they are highly educated (cf. 5.4.2.).

Another cause of underrepresentation was the non-existence of HEIs in Ethiopia until recently, women's reluctance to be empowered and appointed to leadership positions, and the deep-rooted patriarchal system or a culture of male domination in the country (cf. 5.4.2).

The findings also showed that women-related factors, institutional, and socio-cultural factors are the major causes of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in HEIs of south Ethiopia. In this respect, additional challenges included a shortage of facilities and materials, and leadership-related problems such as lack of consistency on the part of existing top-level male leaders (cf. 5.4.2.). The finding shows that it is imperative that top management of HEIs should prioritise the empowerment of women employees. Unfortunately, there were no special programmes meant to empower women, and the same was true at the school level. Female students should be empowered in different social and economic avenues and co-curricular activities as chairpersons and secretaries of committees so that they can exercise leadership for the

social good. School principals should do this to identify and develop more potential women leaders as this is one of the useful strategies (cf. 5.4.2).

The findings show that HEIs do not collaborate with different levels of government in women empowerment campaigns and in providing capacity-building training on leadership for women (cf. 5.4.2).

The findings also showed that women were generally found at the lower levels of organisations, in unsuitable positions without valid reasons and that they suffered unfair labour practices like being fired arbitrarily. This was true at U1, where a woman, who was the head of the office of the president was fired from the office by the president for a minor mistake and unconvincing reasons. Her unceremonious dismissal arguably influenced other women who aspired to take up leadership positions to abandon their ambitions (cf. 5.4.2).

It was also established that there was both implicit and explicit violence perpetrated by men at the top-level management; lack of knowledge or institutional commitment to empower women in top leadership positions; lack of interest in amending the rigid legislation that constrains aspirant women leaders; and failure to support women academics to publish articles in high-impact journals, which is often used as a criterion for promotion to higher academic and leadership positions (cf. 5.4.2).

Contrary to expectations, it was learnt that some women were against affirmative action. They indicated that the work environment was not conducive to women to be in leadership and management positions. There was no capacity-building training for aspirant women leaders. In most cases, men were given priority for capacity-building training in leadership, and women were often reluctant to attend when opportunities for capacity-building training arose. They were unwilling to attend meetings and were not keen to participate in meetings (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.2 Effect of the absence of women in leadership of HEIs.

The findings showed that the effects of underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of the HEIs are widespread. For instance, the organisation misses

the leadership and management potential of women, which is untapped. The institutions suffer from a shortage of role model women leaders who could attract thousands of other women to the education system in general and top leadership and management positions in particular. This situation perpetuates and sustains the domination of HEIs by men especially in leadership positions (cf. Chapter 3 & 5.4.2).

The absence of women in top university management has a number of negative effects on the institution and society as well. Because of the absence of women, many female students and women instructors many problems within the institutions remained unsolved including inefficiency (cf. 5.4.2).

The findings indicate that the absence of women in top leadership and management positions resulted in a male-dominated, inflexible organisational environment, low productivity, corrupt and rigid male leaders, and perpetuation of the patriarchal system (cf. 5.4.2). This could also be associated with lack of quality graduates with communication competence, lack of organisational efficiency and trust and extravagant use of scarce resources.

The exclusion of women from leadership positions also means that their natural management and leadership talents remain untapped, and it highlights the prevalence of unfair and unjust treatment between men and women in academia (cf. Chapter 5). The marginalisation of women creates problems that the government, institutions, society and women themselves should revisit to bring about the desired change for their institutions, women themselves, and the country (cf. 5.4.2). These include missing out on the leadership qualities that women could contribute if they were appointed to senior positions including dealing with diverse groups.

#### 6.4.2.3 Differences that inclusion of women in the leadership of HEIs would bring about

The findings show that the inclusion of aspiring women leaders in senior leadership or management positions could bring about a number of changes for institutions. For example, institutions are likely to be more efficient and effective in resource management, perform highly and achieve better outcomes. Furthermore, female students and instructors are often better performers than men. Women need opportunities to reveal

their leadership potential and practise leadership and management. Moreover, women can be role models for other women both within the education system and outside the system (cf. 3.6 & 5.4.2).

Inclusion of women in senior leadership positions is linked with the efficient use of scarce resources, high commitment, democratic style of leadership, and effective strategies for fighting corruption – which is currently a serious problem in many tertiary institutions (cf. 5.4.2).

Inclusion of women creates a conducive and attractive work environment for staff members; enables the attainment of the missions of HEIs; and facilitates solving societal problems through research conducted via community outreach. The research groups explained that including women in senior leadership positions would help to get rid of society's negative attitudes against female education, women empowerment and appointing them to top positions such as president, vice-president, deans or directors in HEIs (cf. 5.4.2).

Women are part of society and if women were to benefit from their empowerment, it would be society that indirectly benefits from that. This could attract many women who aspire to be leaders or those who want to reach higher leadership positions. The female population of society may improve their morale and self-awareness (cf. 3.6 & 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.4 Making leadership of HEIs democratic

The findings showed that there are a number of strategies that can be used to democratise and diversify leadership and management of HEIs. Creating awareness on the part of all about the ownership of HEIs is one of the strategies. It is important that leaders and managers should be transparent about the recruitment and selection processes and the empowerment programmes in place to support women employees. Awareness creation about the principles of democracy, rights, fairness on capacity-building training, and equality is critical as it leads to leadership diversity (cf. 3.6, 3.7.2 & 5.4.2).

The findings also showed that the government was urged to provide capacity-building for female and male employees with the potential to take up leadership positions at HEIs as these require high levels of competency. Furthermore, the groups urged MOSHE to monitor the efforts and progress of public HEIs in empowering women. The findings revealed that the government did not have adequate capacity-building programmes even though it is the owner of HEIs in Ethiopia (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.5. What would promote cooperation among teams of HEIs?

HEIs should develop systems for accepting and respecting the laws. The government should provide training on the importance of cooperation among teams, dealing with negative attitudes from society. With respect to the identities of women, it is recognised that they are our mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters and that there is need for greater cooperation between women and men. This is in line with the government's efforts and policies though there is still a mismatch between policy stipulations and implementation on the ground regarding women empowerment (cf. 3.8. & 5.4.2).

The finding showed that in order to promote cooperation between the teams, a number of measures should be instituted. There should be positive attitudes, justice, and fairness on the part of male leaders and managers around forging cooperation among all. It is critical that hostility between men and women should be avoided, and institutions should cultivate an environment of equal treatment. Leaders and managers should share their visions among their subordinates. Moreover, participants stressed that leaders should be consistent in their efforts to forge cooperation. To achieve this, they emphasised that male leaders and managers should show commitment and sound communication at all times (cf. 3.4.2, 3.4.3, & 3.4.4).

#### 6.4.2.6 What would make leadership environment conducive to women?

The findings showed that to make the leadership and management environment conducive to women aspiring to become leaders and managers, their workload should be reduced since they have multiple family and work responsibilities. In this regard, HEIs could provide attractive incentives, responsibility allowances, salaries, and other fringe benefits such as decent accommodation for leaders. By providing such resources, HEIs

and the government could incentivise women to aspire towards leadership and management positions (cf. 5.4.2).

The participants ascribed the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in Ethiopia's HEIs to the hostile work environment that was not conducive to women aspiring to take up such positions. Accordingly, they urged HEIs to make the leadership and management environment conducive and attractive to aspiring women leaders and managers. The emphasis was on capacity-building along with the provision of necessary materials and facilities for the aspiring women. In light of this, they believed in the competency of women to lead at a high levels within HEIs. They also raised the need to reduce the teaching loads for women at HEIs taking into account the household responsibilities they have to deal with (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.7 Programmes for empowering women in HEIs

It was suggested that universities should develop programmes such as departments of gender, women's forum offices, and women's leadership programmes. In addition, it was proposed that HEIs should incorporate in their programmes and plans the empowerment of women issues which include appointment to senior leadership positions. Some of the spinoffs of empowering women include possible reduction in corruption levels, unleashing women potential and efficient use of resources. Therefore, it is critical that the representation of women should feature on the agendas of meetings, conferences, and university campaigns and programmes (cf. 5.4.2).

It was discovered that HEIs recently started amending their old senate rules that were rigidly set up and disempowered women. Others disclosed that they awarded their research funds to women principal investigators without any processes and procedures being followed. They also reported that they had plans to sponsor women academics who privately obtained scholarships for research. It was found that universities had started opening gender offices and gender departments to address the issue of women for leadership training. It was also stressed that different plans and programmes of the HEIs should incorporate and mainstream women empowerment issues (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.8 Values of the presence of women in the top leadership positions of the HEIs

The involvement of women in top leadership and management positions may improve the performance of female students, instructors, and institutions as well. It could also improve instructional leadership, lead to quality decision-making, and more new ideas about leadership and management can be generated. Moreover, women may be good role models for other aspiring women (cf. 5.4.2).

It was further established that the inclusion of women in leadership positions may increase the commitment of male leaders and the entire staff because of women leaders' conscientious dispositions and higher work commitment. Productivity, performance and trust would likely improve if this principle were followed (cf. 5.4.2).

The presence of women in senior leadership positions may help to unlock their leadership talent and make the institutions more democratic. In part, this is because women are associated with values of better accountability, responsibility, commitment, transparency, trust, efficiency, smooth communication, and low aggression (cf. 3.2, 3.5 & 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.9 Attitude of the community towards the leadership of women in the HEI

The study found that the attitudes of both women and men were negative towards women leadership, and that even some women who were in leadership positions themselves were not interested in the leadership of other women including the highly educated women – a situation that is referred to as “Queen Bee” syndrome (cf. 5.4.2).

The study also established that in spite of sensitisation efforts on women empowerment and gender equity, some sections of society both educated and uneducated, still held negative attitudes towards women leadership and management (cf. 5.4.2).

It was also found that top male managers were not willing to delegate authority and responsibility to women officials serving under them. They reported that women tended to have no confidence in themselves even though they were educated. Therefore, it could be surmised that society on the whole is negative towards women empowerment, particularly in respect of holding higher leadership positions in organisations such as HEIs. In the same vein, Lumby (2011:925) noted, “In educational leadership, being female

is seen as by colleagues, students, children, and parents as well as stigma, an attribute that is deeply discrediting.” Grogan (2010:761) supported this idea thus, “There are always factions in organisations. Some support women and others oppose them. Men always belittle, disapprove, want to see women fail before they start” (cf. 3.4.1. & 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.10 How socialisation affects aspiring women leaders

Systematic socialisation of women into the negative attitudes of society has a negative impact on women who aspire to apply for leadership and those already in leadership positions. Women also seem to have developed an inferiority complex, lack confidence to defend their rights and are reluctant to assume leadership and management positions (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.11. What promotion of women to the senior leadership position means to society

The findings indicated that society sees the empowerment of women as a human right, ensuring that justice was done, freedom prevailed, women were emancipated, there was equality between men and women, and women were accorded due respect. The empowerment of women seeks to reverse the long oppression of women and doing away with male domination and ensuring that there is equality between men and women (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.12 What is expected of the society to promote women to the senior leadership positions in HEIs?

Society should be cooperative with regard to empowering women, treating both women and men equally, giving equal attention to both their sons and daughters in the home and avoiding discrimination as part of nurturing and developing them. Moreover, society is expected to provide the necessary support to their daughters from the time they start school up to college level. Furthermore, as part of training and development, society and schools were advised to appoint female students and women to leadership and management positions on committees, as secretaries and chairpersons of clubs (cf. 5.4.2). Society is urged not to use negative and discouraging narratives and stereotypical



views against women, but instead to support them and avoid discrimination and prejudice (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.13 The government's role in promoting women to senior leadership positions in HEIs

It emerged from the study that the government had designed policies on women empowerment and instituted a number of affirmative-action programmes. However, a number of gaps were observed in the implementation of these policies and programmes. Accordingly, the participants stressed that the government should revisit the existing policies on women, and address the problems related to implementation. Furthermore, participants emphasised that the government should monitor and evaluate public HEIs with regard to women empowerment. It should make universities accountable for their decisions and programmes even though HEIs are autonomous. Furthermore, it was suggested that the government should capacitate women who aspire to assume leadership positions through training provided both inside and outside the country. It was also suggested that the government should apply a quota system in order to support the elevation of women to leadership positions in different organisations including HEIs (cf. 5.4.2).

Furthermore, participants proposed that the government should amend and improve the recruitment, selection and promotion criteria in HEIs and revisit the higher education proclamation. They urged the federal government and MOSHE to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system of HEIs (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.14 What kind of training programmes should be put in place to promote women to senior leadership positions in HEIs?

In all the public universities that participated in this study, there were no strong programmes to promote women to senior leadership positions. However, some HEIs were starting to amend their statutes and policies so that they could promote women empowerment (e.g., U3). Most sampled universities did not have women empowerment issues on their meeting agendas (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.15 How elevation of women to the HEI Leadership encourages female students and women

The participants stated that the elevation of women to senior management positions might make female students feel free to approach female leaders more easily than male leaders. The presence of women leaders may even energise and boost the morale of female students. It may also improve the performance of female students and instructors and motivate other women to take up leadership positions (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.16 Challenges that women activists should focus on to empower women

The findings showed that to succeed in their fight for gender equity and empowerment, women need unity and solidarity. They should be supported to practise leadership at school through different clubs and committees as members, secretaries, chairpersons and other positions. Women activists were urged to advocate for the advancement of women into leadership and management positions, capacity-building training and awareness creation. Besides, taking into account that the number of female activists was insignificant, and that activism was a difficult task, the few existing female activists were urged to become more forceful and knowledgeable, and to train other women on how to champion activism (cf. 5.4.2.18). It was suggested that women activists should prioritise areas such as equality, equity, diversity, institutional barriers, socio-cultural factors such as socialisation, awareness creation, policy implementation, leadership and management capacity-building training, as well as economic and political-legal problems (cf. 5.4.2).

#### 6.4.2.17 Plans of HEIs to empower women in top leadership positions

The findings indicated that all the public universities of south Ethiopia that participated in this study had no strong and deep-rooted programmes of empowering women and appointing them into senior leadership positions. However, it was observed that some universities had made notable strides with regard to women empowerment by appointing them to the position of vice-president (cf. 5.4.2).

The findings revealed that one of the four universities had started to amend its tight regulations and policies that were against the promotion of women. Besides these, the

selected HEIs did not have sound plans for empowering women in senior leadership and management positions (cf. 5.4.2.).

#### 6.4.2.18 Improving potential of women in leadership and management

Women were urged not to embrace negative attitudes from society. They were expected to work harder than their men counterparts to acquire the required competency for senior leadership positions (cf. 5.4.2.).

### **6.4.3 Summary of Findings Related to Measures (Sub-question 2)**

All four vice-presidents and four focus groups of the public universities from south Ethiopia suggested measures that could be taken to tackle the problems of women underrepresentation as summarised below.

All four vice-presidents and focus groups from the public HEIs, explained that there were several policies, rules and regulations and laws of the country meant to empower women. For instance, the office of prime minister of the country, had formulated a policy for women empowerment and different affirmative-action programmes had been introduced to expand women's access to higher education by reducing their entrance requirements to HEIs compared to male students in order to increase their participation. Furthermore, some special support had been provided for girls students particularly from less privileged regions and poor economic family grounds. Cooperative learning has also been introduced wherein girls were grouped with male students in order to improve their academic performance and graduation rates. The participants indicated that all these attempts had been made to increase the number of women in academia who may be a potential pool for the aspiring women leaders (cf. 5.4.3.).

Apart from the affirmative-action programmes of the government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and other private institutions had also started to include the issue of empowering women in their planning agendas. Furthermore, different advocacy programmes, women associations, and structures had been set up at different organisations. Partly because of this, the number of female students, teachers, and instructors had increased. This was a result of many schools, teachers, universities and

colleges creating an environment conducive to learning, inclusive policies and a high level of government commitment to women empowerment. Different international and regional conventions and declaration have been ratified to improve participation of women in leadership in general and educational leadership in particular (cf. 5.4.3).

All four universities had started to employ outstanding female graduates as graduate assistants and encouraged them to pursue further studies in an effort to increase the number of women academics and a pool for potential women leaders (cf. 5.4.3).

Though the majority of women academics could not compete with their male counterparts, one HEI (U2) appointed those who had not succeeded in being appointed to dean positions, to other directorate positions in order to encourage them to get involved in leadership and to become role models for other aspiring women. Furthermore, female principal investigators were directly awarded the budget allocated for research at U2 though they did not want to conduct research at the same university. The vice-president for academic affairs at this university reported that the new guidelines were being designed for a women's research fund. Though the existing legislation was meant for women promotion, U2 provided equal opportunities of training for both men and women (cf. 5.4.3).

Since 2017, the number of female senate members has increased from null to three. For instance, out of a total of 32 members of senate at U3, three were women and in a management team of ten members, three were women. The university entrance requirements were reduced for female students. More advocacy programmes were run for female students. More support related to sanitation and stipends were made for women particularly those from the less privileged regions of the country. Though not strong, the women forum had started to strengthen the network among women academics (cf. 5.4.3.).

Women started competing among themselves on writing research proposals at all universities though at some universities, this was seemingly done for political reasons. For instance, at U1 and U3 Universities, all the interested women instructors competed for the research grant. However, none were awarded for some unconvincing reasons by

the top management. Though some women were appointed in leadership positions such as directors in administrative wing, the number of women in leadership positions was insignificant in all the public universities under study (cf. 5.4.3.).

In recent years the government has developed sound policies on women, which was not the case during the past regimes in the country. However, the problem was that women themselves did not use them exhaustively on the one hand, and on the other hand, the government, whose responsibility was to take care of all the citizens failed to monitor and evaluate the process of empowering women in senior leadership and management positions at HEIs. As part of preparing women for senior leadership positions, it is imperative to appoint them at lower levels of leadership and management so that they can work their way up through the system. It is a good initiative that HEIs have started to employ some top female graduates in some departments in order to increase their numbers within faculties. Furthermore, amending the existing rigid laws against women is a promising intervention and it should be continued (cf. 5.4.3.)

It also emerged that one of the four universities increased the number of women in important university structures such as senate and management and appointed two female vice-presidents (e.g. U3). They disclosed that they had started supporting female students with materials and lowering their entrance requirements. They also reported that they had recently started opening offices of gender, women's forums, and women's networking platforms. It is critical that women who assumed leadership positions should play an active role in bringing up other aspiring women to senior leadership positions by avoiding the "Queen Bee" syndrome (cf. 5.4.3.).

It was learnt that the government had taken a number of actions including policy formulation regarding women. Two universities have recently provided a number of training for a few women on issues like empowering women and related factors (e.g. U4 & U1). They disclosed that currently some women were appointed as heads of departments such as the head of the Department of Geography, and the Dean of School of Graduate Studies. Special arrangements at libraries for female students had also been implemented. The process of retaining female graduates with high scores in each department had begun (cf. 5.4.3.).

The new government has done a lot to empower women compared with the former governments of the country. However, there is a concern that there is a mismatch between the government's efforts and sound policies on the one hand and their implementation on the ground (cf. 5.4.3)

It also emerged from data analysis that a gender office was opened and run by female staff. In the same vein, some departments were led by the female teaching staff. Furthermore, female graduates with high cumulative grade point averages were employed in each department (cf. 5.4.3)

Admittedly, both the Federal Government and HEIs took some measures concerning the empowering women; however, there was still a big gap or deficit with regard to the empowerment of women in top leadership positions (cf. 5.4.3)

It was learnt that U3 showed some progress in appointing two female vice-presidents though this was still not adequate. However, it was learnt from the data obtained that even women who assumed such senior leadership positions did not play their roles as required to empower other aspiring women in other leadership positions (cf. 5.4.3)

#### **6.4.4 Summary of Findings Related to Challenges Encountered by HEIs, Society, Women, and the Governments (Sub-Question 3)**

All four vice-presidents and 12 deans and directors of four public universities in south Ethiopia highlighted their ideas regarding the challenges encountered in HEIs, women themselves, society, and the government as well as follows:

- There is a lack of offices and materials needed to attract the aspiring women to leadership positions in general and senior leadership positions in particular (cf. 5.4.4);
- Lack of significant number of women academic staff – it is possible to come to the leadership position only if the pool of women teaching staff is wider; however, HEIs could not empower women because of the causes and challenges seen in the discussion (cf. 5.4.4);

- It was learnt from the findings that the deep-rooted socialisation of women into negative attitudes of the society had not been erased from the minds of women despite being are educated and given advocacy training by the government (cf. 5.4.4);
- The prevalence of the patriarchal system and male dominance on one hand, and the increasing numbers of the female population in the country, on the other hand, made government and institutions unable to satisfy women in all aspects including their economic power (cf. 5.4.4);
- The implicit violence of male counterparts is still prevalent in HEIs. Men were not cooperative with regard to appointment of women in senior leadership positions. However, authorities did not seem to be able to tackle such bad practices (cf. 5.4.4);
- The negative attitude of men towards women leadership was still entrenched in the university community and society at large (cf. 5.4.4);
- The ever-changing nature of the country's policies related with women (cf. 5.4.4);
- Satisfying women by providing training on leadership and other benefits in the short term was difficult for HEIs and the government (cf. 5.4.4);
- Leadership by its very nature requires competency. However, most of the women teaching staff are not well-qualified and experienced in leadership or had no exposure to leadership and management (cf. 5.4.4);
- Political instability made aspiring women leaders not to expose themselves to the external environment by moving where they want to move to cf. 5.4.4);
- Biological factors of women also became beyond the control of authorities that created fear of the leadership profession on the part of women (cf. 5.4.4);
- Failure to find male leaders who were positive towards women and women leadership was also a challenge beyond the control of authorities (cf. 5.4.4);
- The mismatch between gender-sensitive policy and its implementation was beyond the control of the existing government because of the entrenched nature of the problem in the country (cf. 5.4.4);
- The extent of the authority and responsibility bestowed upon men related to resource management for top managers was also beyond their control (cf. 5.4.4);

- The longstanding and existing domination of male staff along with their implicit violence was an unsolvable problem in the short term for the top leaders of the HEIs (cf. 5.4.4).

#### **6.4.5. Summary of Findings Related to Women's Feelings towards their Underrepresentation (Sub-Question 4)**

The findings showed that in Ethiopia; it is not only the external factors that affect the women's representation in top leadership positions; but also their personal reasons such as low self-image and efficacy; lack of motivation and confidence; hopelessness because of workload imbalance between household and workplace responsibilities; limited aspirations to management and leadership; lack of ambition to accept challenges; lack of ability to handle crises (cf. 2.3.1); and lack of postgraduate training and skills to compete with their counterparts for promotion and positions of leadership.

The findings also showed that the "Queen Bee syndrome" is a big problem created by women who have already assumed the leadership positions. They show more masculine qualities which they see as more culturally valuable and professional. By showing this, they further want to legitimise their rights to be in important professional positions as well as attaining job security by showing commitment to their professional roles. Such women see other women as rivals – the already empowered women cause stereotyping of other women and reduce the chances of other women to become successful in assuming top leadership positions. On the other hand, the "Cinderella Complex" is prevalent where all the "ugly sisters" fight amongst themselves to try to undermine their potentially successful sisters.

The findings also showed that women are reluctant even to use their constitutional rights partly because of their illiteracy about the existing supportive laws. They are not trained in the leadership and management disciplines and lack commitment to fulfil the criteria towards promotion and empowerment. Thus, they are not satisfied in leadership and management jobs. The findings also showed that women in leadership assumed that the equity-related problems of women were entirely solved and there was no question to address.



The findings also showed that women found the environment of senior corporate life unattractive and opted out of participation. It was also found that women chose from a narrow range of poorly paid occupations. Even if they were given opportunities, women tended not to reach the higher levels of the professions because of sex-role stereotypical attitudes of the society.

The finding also showed that the career orientation and preference of women to other careers is another reason for their poor feelings towards leadership and management professions. Women still undermine themselves because of their socialisation into the negative attitude of the society.

#### **6.4.6. Summary of Findings Related to Strategies to Tackle Women's Underrepresentation in Senior Leadership Positions in HEIs (Sub-question 5)**

The findings show that different conventions and strategies nationally, regionally and globally have been designed to provide access to education by women and to empower women or bring them into leadership positions (cf. 3.8). The Universal Human Rights Declaration of 1948, the World Education Forum of Dakar, the MDGs were adopted by Ethiopia. There were intervention strategies such as increasing women's participation in education at all levels so as to raise the number of women from which able managers could evolve, formulating equal opportunity policies, changing the environment in which women worked and the attitudes towards educated women, flexibility in working hours, and reviewing of recruitment and promotion policies in higher education. In the 1960s and 1970s, various Acts were promulgated to emancipate and liberate women, which was called the time of sexual revolution.

Different women empowering programmes and agenda were also designed such as "Agenda 2063" that expresses the aspiration of the African Union to empower all women by 2063 (cf. 3.8). The findings from the literature also showed that Ghana had adopted the policy framework and strategies to empower and emancipate women through their policy entitled "mainstreaming gender equity and women's empowerment into Ghana's development" (Adusah-Karikari, 2008:79).

The findings also showed that Women's Affairs Office of Ethiopia was opened to solve the empowerment and other problems of Ethiopian women. In this regard, Ethiopia committed itself to crossing the threshold to build the capacity of women through education and training so that they can hold decision-making positions which was identified as one of the twelve critical areas of concerns of the Beijing Declaration and Platform. Ethiopia also launched the mainstreaming policy and is attempting to implement it. And also stipulated in its constitution, higher education proclamation no. 351/2009, and the education policy of 1994 the issue of empowering women. Furthermore, Ethiopia is attempting to implement different affirmative programmes to empower women.

Gender offices are being opened in some universities, and special research funds are being allocated for women research though at a minimal level. Furthermore, higher education entrance grades have been lowered for girls to access higher education, and women's forums have recently been started in universities.

The findings also showed that different universities of Africa have attempted to empower women in senior leadership positions. For instance, the findings showed that in Nigeria, there are qualified women for the top leadership positions in HEIs. However, most people are still reluctant to accept women for senior management positions. Thus, in order to tackle such problems, the government of Nigeria and HEIs took some measures. For instance, recently the government of Nigeria, based on the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (2004) and the NUC agenda, have attempted to integrate human rights and equity issues into its structural reforms of Nigeria's higher education system to improve gender equality (cf. 3.4.1).

The findings also showed that as in other countries of Africa, women are underrepresented in senior leadership positions in Uganda. However, the government and HEIs of Uganda together with SIDA, established the department of women and gender studies that could award second and third degrees in gender studies. Moreover, these universities provided short courses on gender at national level and ensured gender-sensitivity in the governance and administration of Makerere University. Furthermore, both men and women were made to share responsibility and enjoy the benefits equitably,

and the government introduced a series of gender awareness workshops for the top management of the university (cf. 3.4.4).

South Africa is also no exception. Women are underrepresented in the senior leadership positions in HEIs. However, the government and HEIs of South Africa have been taking significant steps to empower women since their freedom from apartheid. HEIs are striving to be non-sexist and non-racist (cf. 3.4.2). The findings showed that many South African universities currently have mission statements, equity plans and targets, equity officers and resources to address the issues of recruitment, retention and success of black and female students. Policies and legislation are drafted to address the issues of gender equity in the workplace. Furthermore, the DHET had initiatives to target women researchers through donor funding and focusing on scarce skills. The finding also showed that in South African universities, there is a programme called WHEEL that offers the leadership and management development opportunities to women in senior positions and explores possible future interventions. The Council for Higher Education (CHE) also requires gender equity in the areas of monitoring and quality assurance to make gender a dimension of its statistical analysis and maps the gender profile of institutions, particularly at the senior staff level (cf. 3.4.2).

HERS-SA is a managed network that aims to improve the gender equity amongst the leadership in HEIs. It provides a professional development for women across South Africa and other African countries. The government of South Africa enacted the affirmative-action legislation as part of the national strategy to redress the imbalances of the past. HESA drew up a number of national plans to address gender imbalance in HEIs in South Africa, and women are being appointed to the position of Vice-Chancellor.

## **6.5 CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the discussions and findings in the previous section, the following conclusions are drawn:

### **6.5.1. Conclusions Related to Causes of Women Underrepresentation in Senior Leadership in HEIs (Sub-question 1)**

- Literature and the findings indicate that there are many barriers that are political, economic, socio-cultural, political-legal and women themselves that inhibit women aspiring to senior leadership positions at public universities of south Ethiopia. Though it was found that the Federal Government introduced a number of affirmative programmes and improved the country's women policy, but their underrepresentation indicates that women did not use their constitutional rights adequately. There also learnt that women were socialised into the negative attitudes of the society about the leadership of women and to have developed an inferiority complex. The findings showed that women were illiterate about both their democratic and human rights. This indicated that women are expected to work hard to emancipate themselves being competent, literate, and above all committed to overcome these challenges (cf. 5.4.2. & 6.3.1).
- There also observed the mismatch between different laws of the country and its implementation on the ground. This was indicated with the low implementation of the policies like education policy of the country, Higher Education Proclamation of 2009(I) about policies and property ownership and inheritance policies, and above all the overarching law of the country – constitutional law regarding the empowerment of women in all sectors in general and education and higher education sector in particular (cf. 5.4.2. & 6.3.1).
- The data obtained through unstructured interviews, FGDs and observations revealed that institutions had no capacity-building and promotion policies for women aspiring to leadership, no strong and transparent promotion policy, no encouraging and supporting physical and psychological environments, facilities, offices, libraries, discussion halls, leadership books, and few motivation mechanisms. Furthermore, it was learnt that male counterparts and male leaders were seen to show and have negative attitudes towards female academic staff – male violence both implicitly and explicitly was evident. It also emerged that the networks among women academic staff were weak. Thus, these all indicate that institutions must revolutionise their approach to empowering women through provision of leadership capacity-building for women

and awareness creation among both the external and internal communities of the universities about the untapped potential of women for the benefit of the women, society, the government, and the institutions (cf. 5.4.2. & 6.3.1).

- It was also seen in the findings and the literature that both women and men consider leadership as if it were a complex profession for women and that they attempted to relate it only to male characteristics and physical strength. Therefore, this indicated that there was a knowledge gap and lack of training on the part of both women and men about the leadership and management concepts (cf. 5.4.2. & 6.3.1. & 2.2).
- Not enough libraries, librarians, up-to-date leadership and women-leadership-related reference books, periodicals that include women-related magazines, bulletins, newspapers that have women columns, safe reading rooms, sanitation, fans or air-conditioning or light. Moreover, there were no separate discussion rooms, women forums and so on. This all indicated that women were still given little attention by institutions and the government, namely MOSHE, which is the owner of the HEIs (cf. 5.4.2. & 6.3.1).
- The issues of women promotion to senior leadership positions were not raised as agenda in any high level meetings like the senate, and not incorporated in the big plans like strategic plans of the universities under study. This indicated that there was a gap in both the government and HEIs in light of implementing the existing policies of the country on empowering women. This indicated that women have been either extremely passive about their rights or were legally illiterate – there was knowledge gap on the part of women (cf. 5.4.2. & 6.3.1).
- It was learnt that all the participants believed that women were underrepresented in the top leadership positions in their respective universities. Furthermore, they believed in the importance of women and their quality in leadership of the higher education. Therefore, the underrepresentation of women in such positions could be attributed more to the poor implementation of the policy and low demands by women for their rights (cf. 5.4.2 & 6.3.1).

### **6.5.2 Conclusions Related to Measures Taken to Improve Women Representation in Leadership of HEIs (Sub-question 2)**

- It was found that different measures had been taken to empower women and to bring them into the system of education from primary to tertiary education. Policies on women were formulated and affirmative-action was supposed to be implemented. To increase the pool of women academics, different advocacy programmes and material support have been made available to women and female students from primary to tertiary level (cf. 5.4.3).
- However, it could be concluded that measures taken were insignificant and were at an infant stage. Moreover, it appeared that the universities began taking such measures because of the political pressure or for the fear of criticism from the top authority, as opposed to any real change of heart on the matter. This indicated that the HEIs have not internalised the importance of leadership diversity by gender yet (cf. 5.4.3 & 6.3.2).
- It was learnt that majority of the women academia were not competent and qualified, not competent and also were not committed to be empowered. However, it could be concluded that there was a good beginning with some HEIs. For example, U2 appointed some women academic staff to some middle level leadership positions after they failed to qualify for the top leadership positions and amended the stringent policies for women aspiring to leadership; U1 employed female graduates who excelled in their studies from each departments. U3 assigned recently two female vice-presidents and thereby increased the number of female board and management members. And U4 had started linking women academics with external partners for their training and research. All the public universities in the study had launched a special research grant for women academic staff and promised to sponsor the training and education of women academia (cf. 6.3.2 & 5.4.3). This, therefore, indicates that that there were good beginnings though more was needed.
- Pocket money and other material support had been provided for female students, particularly from economically less privileged regions of the country to fill the pool of potential aspiring women leaders in the HEIs in the southern Ethiopia, which is a commendable action (cf. 5.4.3).

- There were sound policies in Ethiopia since 1991, though women did not use them exhaustively because of either their legal illiteracy or reluctance to be empowered or for fear of the demands of the leadership profession (cf. 5.4.3).
- It was observed that there were gender offices in all the colleges and schools of all the public universities of south Ethiopia though they were not well-equipped materially and not well-organised in terms of human resources. Thus, it could be concluded that this attempt should be strengthened by all the public universities of south Ethiopia (cf. 6.3.2).

### **6.5.3. Conclusions Related to Challenges of Women Underrepresentation (Sub-Question 3)**

- There was learnt that there were many challenges that male leaders, society at large, the government, and women themselves encountered in the course of attempting to empower or bring women into the senior leadership positions in the HEIs. Lack of sufficient educated women in the pool of the HEIs' teaching staff; low number of women joining the HEIs; socialisation of women to accept gender discrimination; lack of confidence in the leadership and management capacity of women; shortage of resources for providing women with the relevant capacity-building leadership training abroad and inside the country were found to be the challenges. Thus, this indicated that the government, HEIs, women themselves, and the society at large need to work on women empowerment in the senior leadership positions in the public universities of south Ethiopia (cf. 5.4.4 & 6.3.3).
- Lack of offices and materials for women were found to be indicators of the lack of women in senior leadership positions in the HEIs of the public universities of south Ethiopia (cf. 6.3.3).
- It could also be concluded that lack of role model women leaders in the senior leadership positions and lack of more women teaching staff were other challenges to (cf. 6.3.3).
- It could also be concluded that the high levels of socialisation of women to the negative attitudes of the society and patriarchal system that made women dependent on men both politically and economically; the implicit and explicit male violence on women; the

ever-changing and unstable policies and ideologies of the country; failure to satisfy women on leadership and management; biological and women-related factors; failure to get male leaders who are positive towards women leadership; the mismatch between gender policy and its implementation; the still negative attitude of society against women and women leadership and management; the extent of the authority bestowed upon the top management by the Federal Government; 'Queen Bee Syndrome'; glass ceiling; 'glass cliff'; 'Cinderella complex' and so on could be identified as the challenges still beyond the control of the HEIs, the society at large, the Federal Government, and women themselves (cf. 6.3.3).

#### **6.5.4 Conclusions Related to Women's Feelings towards their Underrepresentation in Senior Positions of Leadership in HEIs (Sub-Question 4)**

It was learnt from the findings that women are reluctant to assume senior leadership positions and considered that the leadership work environment is not conducive for them. On the other hand, some women who have already assumed the leadership positions are not willing to promote other women to top leadership positions – 'Queen Bee Syndrome' and 'Cinderella complex' (cf. 2.3.1). Women are also found to be legally illiterate about their constitutional and other relevant laws of the country. They also lacked confidence to compete for leadership positions. This indicates that internal and personal factors attribute to the underrepresentation of women more than the external factors to their underrepresentation.

#### **6.5.5 Conclusions Related to Strategies to Tackle Underrepresentation of Women in Senior Leadership Positions in HEIs (Sub-Question 5)**

Since the 1950s, different national, regional and international conventions, strategies, actions, and proclamations as well were made to access education and to empower women. These measures of institutions and countries are intended to tackle the underrepresentation of women and girls. However, the findings from the literature and empirical evidence showed that the problem is not yet solved – women are still underrepresented in schools, universities, and leadership positions. However, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions in different sectors and systems as well. Still



there is an imbalance between the number of female and male students, female and male instructors, female and male leaders from lower to higher positions, particularly in the HEIs in Ethiopia. This indicates that there is still a gap in implementation of those policies, conventions, and strategies as well. In other words, the mechanisms used to monitor and evaluate the implementation on the ground is poor on the part of the executive bodies at different levels. The control system of the government and HEIs was weak and the strategies used to empower women were almost non-existent although there were sound policies.

## **6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the literature reviewed, conclusions drawn and the findings, the following recommendations are put forward for women of south Ethiopia, the public HEIs of south Ethiopia, the society of south Ethiopia, and the Federal Government and MOSHE, namely, the owner of the HEIs of the country.

### **6.6.1 Recommendations for Women of South Ethiopia**

6.6.1.1. It was found that women make up half the population (nearly 50%) in both the country and institutions, and they have high leadership potential according to some leadership experts. Therefore, they have to know that they are as talented as their male counterparts and they can be as competent as men if they are well-trained and educated in the leadership sciences. They have to know that gender stereotypes are artificial and socially constructed. They also have to avoid the inferiority complex that they have developed or been socialised into since their childhood. Women who have already held leadership positions in any sectors should strive towards paving the way for other leadership aspiring women rather than working against them – avoid the ‘Queen Bee syndrome’ and ‘Cinderella complex’ (cf. 6.3.1.17 & 6.3.1.19).

6.6.1.2. Women should also take up opportunities for education (learning) and should look towards the influential and exemplary women of the world in leadership and management regardless of the levels and the sectors they are in. If women fail to support themselves, no one else will help them. Therefore, taking into account this reality, women should exhaustively use the rights stipulated in both the national policies and international

and regional conventions and policies to emancipate and liberate themselves. Women should endeavour to improve their level of competency through being visionary and learning to be competent leaders in order to succeed. Women should organise forums, create networks among themselves, and conduct research on how to improve their leadership skills and become competent (cf. 6.3.1.17 & 6.3.1.19).

6.6.1.3. If women do not do things for themselves, no one else will. Therefore, they should work hard to emancipate themselves from any likely barriers in their struggle for power, and they have to play a proactive role and amplify their voices to show their faces and to support one another (Brito, 2008). The fear of joining leadership and management in the hard sciences should be addressed. Women should improve their negative attitudes about their inability to doing such things. They should keep their eyes open to role models in different fields (cf. 6.3.1.17 & 6.3.1.19).

6.6.1.4. The findings showed that women have developed an inferiority complex and lack confidence to lead and manage or even to apply for the leadership positions. However, they should not take all the blame for this. This is because of the male-dominated or patriarchal system and their socialisation into this stereotype. Therefore, once recognised that it is only a social construct and artificial discrimination between men and women, the women should ignore it and stand up for equity and equality with their male counterparts in all spheres of life. Women themselves should show their willingness to be empowered to grow and develop themselves, institutions and their country as well sharing the leadership experience that they have been involved in since their childhood. (cf. 6.3.1.17 & 6.3.1.19).

6.6.1.5. Women should conduct research and publish it in reputable journals to fulfil the criteria for promotion to assistant, associate and professorship and allow them to compete for senior or top leadership and management positions (cf. 6.3.1.17 & 6.3.1.19).

## **6.6.2. Recommendations for the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of South Ethiopia**

6.6.2.1. It could be said from the findings that public universities failed to use the potential of women in leadership. Therefore, HEIs, taking into account the qualities of women in

leadership, their rights, and their historic exclusion from the leadership and management dictionaries and offices, should revise their selection, development, and retention policies of their own regarding women. They should make their policies transparent, diverse and inclusive, and should make the institution attractive both physically and psychologically along with providing the aspiring women with the offices, facilities and training. Institutions should develop different strategies like the provision of attractive incentives and training for women to encourage them to aspire to the leadership profession, taking into consideration that it is not only women that benefit from empowering them, but also the institutions and the wider society. Just like in other sectors and issues, diversity in educational leadership is an advantage of the diverse knowledge, skill and capacity for all stakeholders. Therefore, leaders of the public universities should take responsibility for creating space for potential women leaders and in diversifying leadership for the benefit of the institution and the country as well (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.2. Institutions have to consider that women are double-burdened with both the household responsibilities and workloads in institutions. This is clearly indicated in the study. Therefore, along with making the work environment (both physical and psychological) conducive, HEIs should think about revising the workload of female academic staff. This may allow women staff the time to think about leadership in addition to reducing their daily burdens, for example, a lower teaching workload than that of men (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18). It was established that the workload is often greater for married women than unmarried women. Therefore, to reduce such workload in the workplace, institutions should apply or put in place the recommendations made by the Federal Government such as daycare programmes and other strategies to relieve women of such multiple burdens (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.3. Though it is primarily up to women themselves to emancipate and empower themselves, HEIs should strengthen the networking and forum organising process of women in institutions at least until they become embedded in practice. This could be done through support with materials, financial and office provisions, and capacity-building training (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.15).

6.6.2.4. It was also learnt that the majority of the women were suffering from lack of residential houses (if not comfortable houses), distance of the rental houses, expensive costs of rental houses, fluctuating prices of rental houses, safety and security of rental houses, inaccessible transportation and the like. Therefore, institutions, taking into account these real problems, should attempt to provide comfortable and secure residential houses primarily for women to reduce the potential risks and allow women to use their time effectively to think about leadership and teaching as well (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.15).

6.6.2.5. It is advisable for the public universities of Ethiopia (like some Asian, European, and American Universities) to open some women leadership universities or at least such programmes and provide opportunities for free scholarship for some women each year (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.6. Participants responded that senate rules of their universities did not encourage the empowerment and promotion of women. Therefore, the senate rules should be revised in a way that encourages the promotion and empowerment of women taking into account that the institutions, women themselves and society may benefit from the empowerment of women particularly in top and senior leadership positions of the HEIs (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.7. It is obvious that the teacher or instructor pools are sources of potential female leaders. Hence, institutions, in collaboration with the Federal Government should create means of employing more female instructors and strengthen what they have already started (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.8. It is evident that women are our mothers or sisters or wives. Their benefits become the benefits of the entire family or the society. However, some leaders and men unknowingly act against women. Therefore, in order to tackle such problems related to ignorance and illiteracy, members of the higher institutions and the society at large should be given continuous and sustainable training to improve the relationship between men and women (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.9. Findings showed that women empowerment was not part of the strategic plans and agendas of some of the universities, so it appeared that universities were against the Federal policy of the country. Therefore, taking into account the reality that without the active participation of women in different situations and areas, not only the growth and development of countries, but also the survival of the generations are unthinkable, institutions should incorporate women empowerment in their own strategic plans and make it part of every agenda (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.15).

6.6.2.10. Bringing women to any position of leadership is not enough. They have to get support and should be encouraged by authorities. This should therefore be the responsibility of the HEIs (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.11. Women should get financial and technical support to publish articles and be promoted to assistant and associate professorship to fulfil the criteria for senior leadership positions (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.12. HEIs should provide women with different policy and guideline manuals related to their empowerment, and periodically orient them through conferences and meetings (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.13. Delegation is one of the strategies to help people exercise leadership and management for the future. Therefore, male leaders who have already assumed the positions should learn to delegate authority and responsibility to the women on the teaching staff (though their number are insignificant) (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.14. The recently started trend of retaining one of the top performed female graduates should be maintained until the number of female academic staff positions are saturated (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.18). Though some women are not interested in affirmative action, nevertheless, to balance the number of women and men leaders and staff, there should be affirmative action both institutionally and nationally (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.15. Universities should have continuous links with schools through community services projects to capacitate students who are the potential leaders or staff of the higher education and the country as well (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.16. Women-sensitive policies, rules and regulations should be formulated throughout the country to bring about fairness to women (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 3.4.4).

6.6.2.17. Neat, well-equipped, safe and secured libraries and laboratories, classrooms, offices, attractive and conducive teaching-learning environment for both female staff and female students should be created in the public higher institutions (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.18. The employment procedures, such as selection and recruitment aspects of the public HEIs were revised and amended in favour of both women and men staff (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.15), this would improve women's uptake into these positions.

6.6.2.19. HEIs should take into account the issue of capacitating female students in leadership concepts during their studies whatever their field of specialisations may be (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.20. Female academic staff should stop being reluctant to apply for leadership positions and, at the same time, strive towards on a par with their male counterparts taking into account that from their empowerment they themselves, institutions, large society and the government as well may benefit considerably (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.21. The trend of appointing women directly to some leadership and/or management positions seems better to make them be seen and exposed for their talents even if they are not recognised by their male counterparts in some positions (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.22. It may not be always possible for HEIs to provide scholarships for hundreds of female academics from different disciplines. Therefore, in this regard, HEIs should encourage women academic staff to search for scholarship privately and support and

sponsor them financially if they happen to get scholarship (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.23. If awareness programmes were periodically made available for male counterparts regarding the importance of leadership diversity of men and women in the higher education, this could go a long way in stopping implicit violence against women academics (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.24. Simply increasing the number of women in academia or bringing them (women) to leadership position may not suffice, because this may not mean empowering women. Therefore, higher officials of the universities, in collaboration with the MOSHE and other partners should regularly capacitate the already empowered women and should check progress on them. This finding showed that in case of U3, half of the members of administrative boards, and two vice-presidents were women, yet they were found not to be active role players regarding the empowerment of other women staff, because of the absence of an adequate support system (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.25. HEIs should appoint women at different lower leadership positions before allowing them to apply for the senior or top leadership positions so help them learn leadership and management (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.26. Top leaders of HEIs, more than anybody else should take responsibility for the non- or underrepresentation of women in the senior leadership positions taking into account that they have legitimate and reward power to bring the leadership aspiring women to the top position in their respective institutions and levels (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.15).

6.6.2.27. The findings show that the work environments were not conducive for women in leadership. Therefore, HEIs, together with their owner, namely MOSHE, should make the work environment attractive and conducive to the aspiring women staff both physically and psychologically – safe and quality staff lounges, standardised libraries, toilets, neat offices and rest rooms with comfortable seats and tables, recreation centres including indoor games, and beds to take naps (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18).

6.6.2.28. The reward and motivation systems need to be developed to make women aspire to and apply for the leadership and management of HEIs (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.18). The HEIs should create networks with primary and secondary school teachers and cluster female supervisors and principals as well to breed potential female leaders for the future institutions like universities (cf. 6.3.1.12, 6.3.1.15 & 6.3.1.18). The salaries, position allowances and other benefits for the leaders of HEIs should be made attractive and decent for the aspiring women leaders (cf. 6.3.1.7, 6.3.1.12 & 6.3.1.18), and at least equal to those of the men in these positions.

6.6.2.29. According to Brito (2008), HEIs failed to understand how the subtle forms of discrimination in institutional cultures create barriers to women success. Therefore, it is imperative for the HEIs not to ignore the wealth of women leadership available in their institutions.

### **6.6.3. Recommendations for the Society of South Ethiopia**

6.6.3.1. Society should know that by empowering women, at different senior positions in the higher education institution, society can benefit, because women are either our daughters, or our wives or our sisters and so on. They have to take into account that both education and empowering women are said to be empowering the large society. Therefore, the society should avoid negative attitude regarding women, should learn that women are as talented as men for leadership, should enlarge the potential pool of women for leadership through providing education for female students starting from the primary level, and should stop discrimination between male children and female children from their childhood. Both women and men are gifts of God. Hence, discrimination between male and female is immoral, illegal, and unethical. Therefore, society should give equal emphasis to the education and power of both women and men (cf. 6.3.1.9 & 6.3.1.13).

6.6.3.2. School leaders should be made to work hard on female students who are the source of potential women leaders of both the HEIs and the country through appointing them as chairpersons and secretaries of the clubs and other co-curricular activities to exercise leadership and management builds up from the lower levels (cf. 6.3.1.9 & 6.3.1.13).



6.6.3.3. Society should avoid the unreasonable negative attitudes towards their daughters, sisters, mothers, and spouses. The findings show that women are as talented as men and as competent as men when given a chance to lead and manage. They have to break through the glass ceiling and counter prejudice wherever it is found (cf. 6.3.1.9 & 6.3.1.13).

#### **6.6.4. Recommendations for MOSHE and the Federal Government of Ethiopia**

6.6.4.1. The ownership of the Ethiopian HEIs was questioned, because the history of public higher institution dating back to 1950s shows that the participation of women presidents has been negligible. All the government appears to have done his to create the 'gender policies' on paper. Therefore, women are still underrepresented in the leadership positions of educational institutions in general and in public higher educations in particular. Hence, the government should monitor what is happening in this regard and take measures to empower women taking into account their talents in leadership and management, their numbers (being half of the population), and their rights (cf. 6.3.1.14).

6.6.4.2. It was found that there are sound policies regarding women in Ethiopia. However, these policies are not implemented. Women are still underrepresented in senior leadership position in HEIs in the public universities of south Ethiopia. Therefore, both the Federal and regional governments should develop a monitoring and evaluation system of the implementation of those policies on the ground to make universities accountable for the failure to empower women in leadership positions (cf. 6.3.1.14).

6.6.4.3. Advocacy and awareness creation programmes regarding the importance of leadership diversity in gender in HEIs of the public universities of Ethiopia, leadership qualities of women, and the natural talents of women in leadership and management professions should be designed by the government in collaboration with HEIs, other internal and external partners and the wider society (cf. 6.3.1.14).

6.6.4.4. In order to attract and retain dozens of aspiring potential women leaders in the system and gain a lot from them, government should design an attractive salary scale and incentives for leaders in general and female leaders in particular in the HEIs (cf. 6.3.1.14).

6.6.4.5. The Federal Government as the owner of HEIs should be committed to make women empowerment mandatory in HEIs through the development of well-controlled monitoring system – taking into consideration that women are good at fighting corruption; naturally better talented; highly experienced in management since their childhood; efficient in the use of resources; easily articulate language and communicate with their employees; more democratic in the use of leadership style and more humble in their work groups; and good role models for the female population. The Federal Government is advised to continuously improve the hidden curriculum of both the schools and HEIs that were both found to be both implicitly and explicitly against capacity-building of women (cf. 6.3.1.14).

6.6.4.6. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that makes men's and women's experiences an integral factor in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes (Tiessen, 2004). Therefore, in this regard, the Federal Government should both strengthen and expand the already started main streaming programme (cf. 3.8).

## **6.7 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The literature review, observations, and the current existing statistics of the public universities of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia showed that there was little information about the actual position of women in senior leadership positions in higher education. There was also insufficient data on the factors affecting women aspiring to senior leadership positions. Therefore, the findings of this study were thought to be significant given the scarcity of women in senior leadership positions in the public universities of southern Ethiopia despite the larger number of women currently graduating from the HEIs of Ethiopia.

Therefore, the study hoped to yield adequate information for the women who aspire to hold the senior leadership positions in higher education. Furthermore, it was hoped to add to the literature on women leadership in higher education (cf. Barbuto & Gifford, 2010:4), because previously there were no studies conducted on women leadership in

Ethiopia regarding higher education. Moreover, the study hoped to acquaint the experts in the leadership field with greater knowledge about women leadership.

Finally, it was hoped that the findings through different mechanisms would contribute to the reduction of both implicit and explicit violence (both internal and external) over women and may bring more women to the higher leadership positions in higher education. Moreover, it was believed that the findings would inform the policy makers of the country about the gaps of empowering women and would hopefully make them craft gender-sensitive policies in the country and develop a system of monitoring the implementation of such gender-sensitive policies and laws. The findings would also make the HEIs look at themselves to improve the status of women and benefit from the diversified leadership of both women and men in the HEIs.

Furthermore, if women hold the senior leadership positions of the universities, first, they become models for tens of thousands of women in the country; second, they benefit economically from the sound (or decent) salaries they earn; they may psychologically be satisfied and motivated more; and even be more socially accepted by society. The study also aimed to provide those who are in the position of making or revising policy with adequate information about the gap between women and senior leadership positions in HEIs (cf. 1.5).

Furthermore, the study was aimed at providing the policy makers and higher officials of the universities with evidence-based information for decision-making in their respective universities and positions. It was also hoped to allow all the concerned bodies to explore individuals, or organisations, simple through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programmes (Creswell, 2007:67; Yin, 2009:87). It was aimed at increasing the knowledge of people or situation of women underrepresentation in the positions of leadership. It is hoped that it would bring social change in the existing society regarding both the view and the action. For example, it may reduce oppression, and discrimination against women upon dissemination of the findings through the use of different electronic media and presenting at conferences of different types (cf. 1.5)

## 6.8 A MODEL DERIVED FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN HEIS

The researcher derived the model below for the empowerment of women academic staff in the senior or top leadership and management positions of the public HEIs based on the empirical findings and literature.

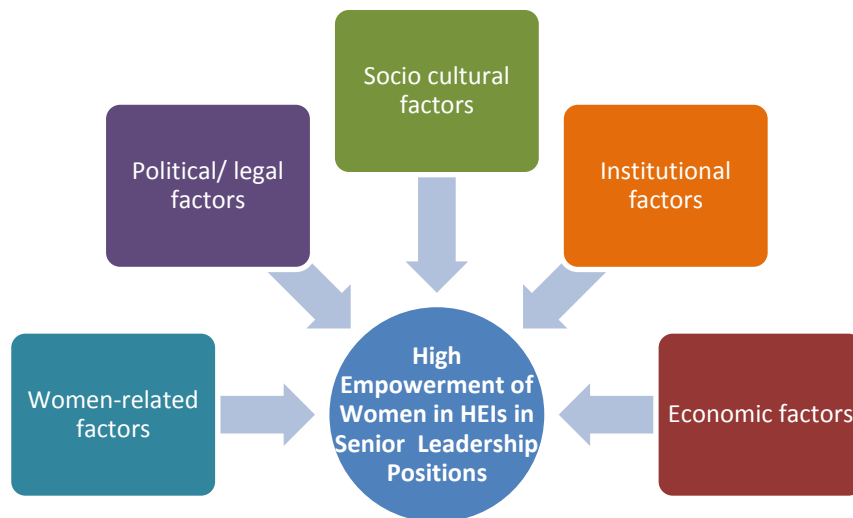


Figure 6.1: Women empowerment strategy model of senior leadership and management positions in HEIs

### 6.8.1 Institutional Factors (Independent Variables)

From the findings in Chapter 5, institutional problems played a great role in the underrepresentation of women in the leadership positions in general and senior leadership positions in particular. Hence, it is believed by the researcher that if these were addressed, the representation of women academia in both the senior and other leadership positions may improve. This includes exposure of the aspiring women academia to short-, medium-, and long-term domestic and international leadership and management training. Making the leadership facilities and materials in the institution accessible to women is another likely strategy to improve women participation in the senior leadership positions.

Avoiding male violence (both implicit and explicit) is also one of the anticipated solutions for empowering women. One of the problems identified in Chapter 5 was male violence

and this should be eliminated in order to empower women. It is also believed by the researcher that appointing women academia in different lower leadership and management positions in the HEIs and assigning female students to positions of chairperson, secretary, and members of committees during their studies would prepare them for future leadership in HEIs. It is also believed that reducing the teaching load for female teaching staff may provide women academia with adequate time to think about leadership and management of the HEIs in general and senior leadership positions in particular.

The formation and strengthening of women forums in the HEIs may pave the way to empower women. It is also evident that publishing articles in reputable journals is one of the criteria for promotion and empowerment in the public HEIs of the country. Hence, if the institutions could create enabling conditions for the aspiring women academia to publish through different strategies along with providing research grants, women would both learn a lot and fulfil the criteria of promotion to the senior leadership positions.

It is also believed that improving different services for women academia like residence houses, transport, and other allowances may attract aspiring women to the senior leadership and management positions. Opening the women leadership and management departments in all universities of the country would help to fill the pool of potential women leaders. Hence, HEIs together with the Federal Government are advised to open such programmes in all the universities they govern. Moreover, it is believed that more women would take up leadership and management positions in the HEIs if the position allowances for the leaders and the salaries of the HEIs for their employees were attractive.

#### **6.8.2 Political-Legal Factors (Independent Variables)**

It is evident that if there is something wrong with the political-legal aspect of the country, nothing can be right. Therefore, it is believed that by the researcher that women representation in the senior leadership positions in the HEIs may be improved if the Federal Government improves the law and policy-related factors (variables).

There needs to be a gender-sensitive policy in the country that can be easily amended from time to time. Monitoring and evaluation programme should be in place to check whether the empowerment of women in senior leadership positions has been realised or not. Based on the findings, more capacity-building training may bring more aspiring potential women leaders into the system. Moreover, making HEIS amend their closed and male-centred policies regarding women, would bring more aspiring women leaders into the senior leadership positions in the HEIs. Improving the salary of the women in HEIs and the types and qualities of affirmative action for the women academic staff would also bring about change on women empowerment. Finally, improving the hidden curriculum related to female students would bring more women leaders into the senior leadership positions.

### **6.8.3 Women-Related Factors (Independent Variables)**

It can be seen from both the findings and the literature that women themselves are sometimes against the other women – Queen Bee Syndrome and Cinderella complex. Therefore, it is believed that improving such conditions through different advocacy training and creation of awareness for women through women activists and through the creation of networks among women would help to overcome these barriers. Women should develop competencies (knowledge and skill) through various forms of training, because without knowledge and skill, it is impossible to think about leadership and management. Hence, improving the capacity of women through knowledge and skill would likely improve the empowerment of women in the senior leadership positions in the HEIs.

Women should expose themselves to different leadership and management training programmes to improve their knowledge and skill. Women should be literate on different policies and laws of the country to be leaders and managers. Avoiding the inferiority complex that developed because of the socialisation into the negative attitude of society on the part of women would improve women representation in the senior leadership positions in the HEIs.

Women should commit themselves to becoming as competent as their male counterparts, and to be confident and optimistic. They are advised to avoid and ignore the illogical negative thoughts and ideologies of the society to assume leadership positions.

#### **6.8.4 Socio-Cultural Factors (Independent Variables)**

It was found that society as a whole can influence the attitudes and thoughts of others and can have both a negative and positive influences on others. This happened and is happening in Ethiopia. The attitude of society in Ethiopia and of course elsewhere was and is not positive towards women, particularly in the leadership and management of women (Genet, 2014:33). Hence, eliminating such stereotypes and discrimination against women, improving access for women/women to schools and universities, providing female students and women with all the necessary support starting from the lower levels, developing confidence in women, and treating both sons and daughters and men and women equally would allow more women access to senior leadership positions.

#### **6.8.5 Economic Factors (Independent Variables)**

Poverty and the unfair economic laws of a country play a negative role both on the access to and empowerment of women in all levels of leadership and management. This was found to be true in Ethiopia, and south Ethiopia in particular. Therefore, it is believed that more women would come to the leadership positions in general and senior leadership positions in particular, if schools were made accessible to female students to fill the pool of potential women leaders, and female students, particularly from poor families were supported in many aspects both at schools and universities/colleges. In addition, if the economic policy regarding women were improved, it is believed that more women would come into leadership and management positions in general and senior leadership/management positions in particular.

#### **6.8.6 High Empowerment of Women in Senior Leadership Positions in HEIs (Dependent Variable)**

It is believed by the researcher that if the above independent variables are improved, the possibility of seeing more women in the senior management and/or leadership positions is inevitable (cf. 6.8).

#### **6.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

It is evident that research cannot be free of challenges (Creswell, 2014:237). Though they could be overcome by the researcher together with the supervisor and other participants, the researcher faced a number of challenges in the course of conducting this research. Absence of written materials for reference and qualitative type of research already conducted regarding empowerment of women in the senior leadership positions of the HEIs in Ethiopia were the first serious problems. This happened because this study was the first of its kind in Ethiopia in general and south Ethiopia in particular.

Finally, it is hoped that the aspiring potential researchers who are interested in such an area of study will not encounter the same problems because this study could provide a foundation for them.

#### **6.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The researcher believes that the purpose of this study has been achieved. However, taking into account that women empowerment related problems are very broad, other factors may contribute to the underrepresentation of women in the senior leadership positions, I suggest the following areas of study for further research:

- 1) Roles of public HEIs top leaders in empowering the aspiring women academia in the top leadership/or management positions;
- 2) Contributions of higher level training in empowering women in top leadership positions;
- 3) Is the pool of women academics full for empowering women in the leadership positions in the HEIs?
- 4) Do women exhaustively know their leadership potential?



5) Why should people worry about empowering women in top leadership positions?

## **6.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter dealt with the major findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The major findings based on one main question and five sub-questions were rediscussed. Together with those major findings, conclusions were drawn with the likely implications. Finally, the likely suggestions for the very concerned bodies – the HEIs of south Ethiopia, the federal government and MOSHE who are owners of the higher institutions, women themselves, and for the society of south Ethiopia – were put forward, taking into account and learning from the findings that these bodies were the sources for both the problems of and solutions for the underrepresentation of women in the top /or senior leadership positions in the public universities of south Ethiopia. Finally, contributions of the study, the derived model for empowering women in senior leadership positions in HEIs by the researcher based on the findings from the empirical evidence and reviewed literature, limitations of the study and five areas of further research were suggested.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

  
UNISA  
University of South Africa

**UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Date: 2019/08/14

Ref: 2019/08/14/53342771/05/MC

Dear Mr Labiso

Name: Mr TO Labiso

Student No.: 53342771

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2019/08/14 to 2024/08/14

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mr TO Labiso  
E-mail address: ouketaf@yahoo.com  
Telephone: +251 91 106 1110

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof V Msila  
E-mail address: msilavt@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3658

**Title of research:**

**Underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions of the public universities of South Ethiopia**


**Qualification:** D. Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/08/14 to 2024/08/14.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/08/14 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.



University of South Africa  
Prof. Dr. Mphahlele Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 362 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za

## APPENDIX B: LETTER OF PERMISSION TO UNIVERSITIES

University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management

Date: -----

Ref. No.: -----

To: ----- University

**Sodo**

**Subject: Request for Permission to conduct a Research**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, **Tafano Ouke Labiso**, am doing research with V. MSILA, a professor in a department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled “*The Underrepresentation of Women in Senior Leadership Positions in the Public Universities in South Ethiopia*”.

The aim of the study is to investigate factors that contributed to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in the public universities of south Ethiopia. I hope this examination will reveal pertinent information and possible recommendations that would have a huge bearing for policies in Ethiopia. Your university is selected as one of the sample universities based on its characteristics which are relevant to the study’s objectives.

It is hoped that policy makers, women at different levels both inside and outside the universities (who are aspiring leadership), university leaders and feminist groups will benefit from the findings. Furthermore, it may add the knowledge base for the literature of management and leadership on women. There will not be any significant risk with conducting this study.

Finally, with regard to the dissemination of the findings, it is hoped to inform all the concerned bodies including your university through different seminars, workshops and meetings. Apart from that, one copy of the findings will be left at the libraries of the participant universities.

Sincerely Yours!

*Tafano Ouke Labiso, researcher*

## APPENDIX C: LETTER OF CONSENT

University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management

### A LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_-college, \_\_\_\_\_), confirm that the  
person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature,  
procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or he had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the  
information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to  
participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free  
to withdraw at any time I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a  
research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my  
participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agreed to the focus group discussion, and I have received a signed copy of the informed  
consent agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ University

-----

Participant Signature Date

Tafano Ouke Labiso, researcher

-----

Researcher's signature Date

## APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management  
*Date; October 2019*

*Title: Underrepresentation of Women in Senior Leadership Positions in the Public Universities of South Ethiopia*

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Tafano Ouke Labiso and I am doing research towards a PhD under the supervision of Prof. V. MSILA in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management at the university of South Africa (UNISA). We are inviting you to participate in the study entitled “Underrepresentation of Women in Senior Leadership Positions in the Public Universities of South Ethiopia”.

The aim of the study is to investigate factors that contributed to the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in the public universities of south Ethiopia, to come with the solutions and indicate the workable strategies to mitigate the problem.

You are invited because of your qualification, experience, position held and also your commitment. You are one of the four vice-presidents to be interviewed in the four universities of the study.

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving reason. There will not be any significant risk with conducting this study. Because the participants will not mention their names – data will be gathered anonymously.

Finally, with regard to the dissemination of the findings, it is hoped to inform all the concerned bodies including you through different seminars, workshops and meetings. Apart from that, one copy of the findings will be left at the libraries of the participant universities.

Yours Sincerely

*Tafano Ouke Labiso, researcher*

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE

University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management

*Interview Questions (unstructured and face-to-face)*

*For*

*The Vice-presidents of the public universities of South Ethiopia*

These interview questions have been designed by the researcher of UNISA in the College of Education Department of Educational Leadership and Management to get perceptions of the vice-presidents of sample universities and colleges of the public universities of southern Ethiopia regarding the underrepresentation of women in the senior leadership positions. Hence, you are kindly requested to provide your genuine information.

1. What would you say about the effect of the absence of women in your institution in the management team?
2. What differences would the inclusion of women make in the improving of your institution?
3. What are the reasons for diversity not to be accommodated by your institutions?
4. What should be made in your opinion to make the leadership/ management of your university democratic?
5. What do you think would promote cooperation and working teams in your institution?
6. What would your institution do to make the leadership or management environment conducive for women?
7. What kind of programmes should be followed in your institutions if women are needed to be involved in the management structures of your institutions?
8. In your opinion what values would the presence of women in management positions add to the success of your institutions?
9. What is the attitude of your community towards the management of women?
10. In what ways would women enhance quality in your institutions?

11. In what ways would socialisation affect women managers?
12. What would the promotion of women to the leadership position mean to the society at large?
13. What activities should be made to make women be interested in the profession of higher education leadership?
14. What is expected of the society to promote women to the leadership of higher education?
15. In what ways should the government help women to make them assume the leadership positions in higher education?
16. What would the training programmes for women entail in your institution (if any)?
17. How will the elevation of women in the higher education management encourage female students in particular and women in general?
18. What are the challenges that women activists should focus on while fighting for the rights of women?
19. Does your institution have plans of improving the potential of women in leadership? if so, what are they?
20. How does your institution support women's potential as leaders?
21. What are the measures your institution and other concerned bodies undertaken to tackle this problem if you believe that some or all of the problems mentioned under "A" above are true?
22. What are the likely challenges that institutions faced while attempting to tackle the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions?
23. What are the likely challenges that authorities faced while attempting to tackle the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions?



## **APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE**

University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management

### *Focus Group Interview Questions*

*For*

*Deans of the public universities of South Ethiopia*

These interview questions are designed by the researcher of UNISA in the College of Education Department of Educational Leadership and Management to get perceptions of the deans of different colleges regarding the underrepresentation of women in the senior leadership positions in the public universities of southern Ethiopia. Hence, you are kindly requested to provide your genuine information.

1. What would you say that the effect of the absence of women in your institution in the management team?
2. What differences would the inclusion of women make in the improving of your institutions?
3. What are the reasons for diversity not to be accommodated by your institutions?
4. What should be made in your opinion to make the leadership/ management of your university democratic?
5. What do you think would promote cooperation and working teams in your institution?
6. What would your institution do to make the leadership or management environment conducive for women?
7. What kind of programmes should be followed in your institutions if women are needed to be involved in the management structures of your institutions?
8. In your opinion what values would the presence women in management positions add to the success of your institution?
9. What is the attitude of your community towards the management of women?
10. In what ways would women enhance quality in your institutions?

11. In what ways would socialisation affect women managers?
12. What would the promotion of women to the leadership position mean to the society at large?
13. What activities should be made to make women be interested in the profession of higher education leadership?
14. What is expected of the society to promote women to the leadership of higher education?
15. In what ways should the government help women to make them assume the leadership positions in higher education?
16. What would the training programmes for women entail in your institution (if any)?
17. How will the elevation of women in the higher education management encourage female students in particular and women in general?
18. What are the challenges that women activists should focus on while fighting for the rights of women?
19. Does your institution have plans of improving the potential of women in leadership? if so, what are they?
20. How does your institution support women's potential as leaders?
21. What are the measures your institution and other concerned bodies undertaken to tackle this problem if you believe that some or all of the problems mentioned under "A" above are true?
22. What are the likely challenges that institutions faced while attempting to tackle the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions?
23. What are the likely challenges that authorities faced while attempting to tackle the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions?

## APPENDIX G: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management

### *Checklist for Observation*

This observation checklist is prepared by the researcher of UNISA in College of Education to get additional information from the sample universities regarding the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership position in southern public universities of the Federal Government of Ethiopia.

S.N.	ITEMS	REMARKS
1	Level of women participation in asking questions and forwarding suggestions in meetings, conferences, and workshops	
2	Minutes will be observed whether attempts made to empower women by institution	
3	Everyday role of women in the institution	
4	Library use of women---women busy in library use	
5	Presence of Women promotion supportive gender offices	
6	Do university community behave towards women staff positively—is there male violence?	
7	Physical environment attractiveness for women	
8	Availability of more women teaching staff---more pool of women academia	
9	Respect given for women by the members of the community	
10	Availability of leadership supportive materials for women in the libraries	
11	Participation of women in different committees and clubs to exercise leadership?	

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
12	Existence of well-equipped and safe libraries for aspiring women leaders to capacitate them----well-equipped with leadership materials and comfortable for women	
13	Sufficient materials for women on women leadership	
14	Sufficient and quality meeting halls for women---where they can freely discuss about their promotion and their rights	
15	Workload for women	
16	Recreation centre to retain women academic staff in the institution	
17	Physical fitness of women—being physically charismatic and energetic	
18	English language proficiency-----that is medium of communication in higher education	

## APPENDIX H: REGISTRATION SLIP OF 2020

0850 M1RST

LABISO T O MR STUDENT NUMBER:53342771 TAFANO OUKE

WOLAITA SODO UNIVERSITY ENQUIRIES NAME M&D ADMIN SUPPORT

P O BOX 138 ENQUIRIES TEL: 0124415702

WOLAITA

ETHIOPIA

DATE: 2019-12-19

Dear Student

I wish to inform you that your registration has been accepted for the academic year indicated below. Kindly activate your Unisa mylife (<https://myunisa.ac.za/portal>) account for future communication purposes and access to research resources.

DEGREE: PHD (EDUCATION) (90019)

TITLE: an exploration of the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions in public universities in South Ethiopia: a case study

SUPERVISOR: Prof M LEKHETHO ([lekhem@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lekhem@unisa.ac.za))

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2019

TYPE: THESIS

SUBJECTS REGISTERED: TFPEM01 PhD - Education (Education Management) A statement of account will be sent to you shortly.

You must reregister online and pay every academic year until such time that you can submit your dissertation/thesis for examination.

If you intend submitting your dissertation/thesis for examination you have to submit an Intention to submit form (available on the website [www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)) at least two months before the date of submission. If submission takes place after 15 November, but before the end of January of the following year, you do need not to reregister and pay registration fees for the next academic

year. Should you submit after the end of January, you must formally reregister online and pay the full fees.

Please access the information with regard to your personal librarian on the following link:

[http://www.unisa.ac.za/libinfomd\](http://www.unisa.ac.za/libinfomd/)

Yours faithfully,

Dr F Goolam

Registrar

0832

A I R M A I L  
LABISO T O ME  
TAYANG GUME  
WOLAITA SODO UNIVERSITY  
P O BOX 138  
WOLAITA  
ETHIOPIA

STUDENT NUMBER : 5334-277-1

ENQUIRIES TEL : 0861670411  
FAX : (013)429-4150  
EMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za

2019-02-07

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification:		PHD (EDUCATION)	(90019)	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION		
CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT		NQF credits	LANG.	EXAM DATE CENTRE (PLAC)
Study units registered without formal exams:						
TFEDM05		DEd - Education Management		**	E	
TFEDM01		PhD - Education (Education Management)		**	E	
* Exam transferred from previous academic year						

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units

\* Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations ([www.unisa.ac.za/register](http://www.unisa.ac.za/register)).  
Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year.  
Students registered for the MBA, MEd and DBL degrees must visit the SBL's ESOOnline for study material and other important information.  
Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification.  
Readmission rules for MEd: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT:		16250.00				
-----						
Payable on or before:						
Immediately: 16250.00	2019/03/31:	0.00	2019/05/15:	0.00	2019/08/15:	0.00
	2019/11/15:	0.00	2020/03/15:	0.00		
-----						

Yours faithfully,

Dr F Goolam  
Registrar



734X 0 00 0



University of South Africa  
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Faxline: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management

A LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, Temesgen Thomas (pho) AAVP  
Social Science college, Wachemo University, confirm that

the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or he had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time. I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agreed to the focus group discussion, and I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Temesgen Thomas, Vice President for Academic Affairs, WACHAMO university

PHD 29/10/2019  
Participant Signature Academic Affairs Vice Preside Date

Tafano Ouke Labiso, researcher

[Signature] 29/10/2019  
Researcher's signature Date

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University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management

A LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, TSEGAYE ALEMAYEHU, Dean of  
ENGINEERING college, Wolaita Sodo University, confirm that  
the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature,  
procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.  
I have read (or he had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information  
sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the  
study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time I  
am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal  
publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential  
unless otherwise specified.

I agreed to the focus group discussion, and I have received a signed copy of the informed consent  
agreement.

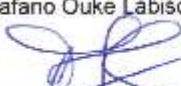
Tsegaye Alemayehu, Dean of Engineering College  
Wolaita Sodo university

 ፕሮፌሰር ፕላን ዲን  
Dean, College of  
Participant Signature Engineering

10/10/2019  
Date



Tafano Ouke Labiso, researcher

  
Researcher's signature

10/10/2019  
Date

University of South Africa

College of Education

Department of Educational Leadership and Management

**A LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I, Riverwa Gndwe (PhD) V/President  
Qutha, University college, \_\_\_\_\_), confirm that  
 the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature,  
 procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or he had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information  
 sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the  
 study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time I  
 am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal  
 publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential  
 unless otherwise specified.

I agreed to the focus group discussion, and I have received a signed copy of the informed consent  
 agreement.

Riverwa Gndwe (PhD) V/President for Research  
Qutha, University

Participant Signature

Date

18-02-12 EC/29/10/2019

Tafano Ouke Labiso, researcher

Researcher's signature

Date

18-02-12 EC



University of South Africa  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management

**A LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I, Dr. Markos Yohannes Dean  
CNCS college, Dilla University, confirm that  
the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature,  
procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or he had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information  
sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the  
study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time I  
am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal  
publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential  
unless otherwise specified.

I agreed to the focus group discussion, and I have received a signed copy of the informed consent  
agreement.

Dr. Markos Yohannes Dean of CNCS  
Dilla University university

Participant Signature Markos Yohannes Bay (PhD) Date 28/10/19  
Dean, College of Natural and Computational Sciences

Tafano Ouke Labiso, researcher

Researcher's signature

Date